

# IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 9, NO. 39

\$1.25

OCTOBER 16-22, 1985

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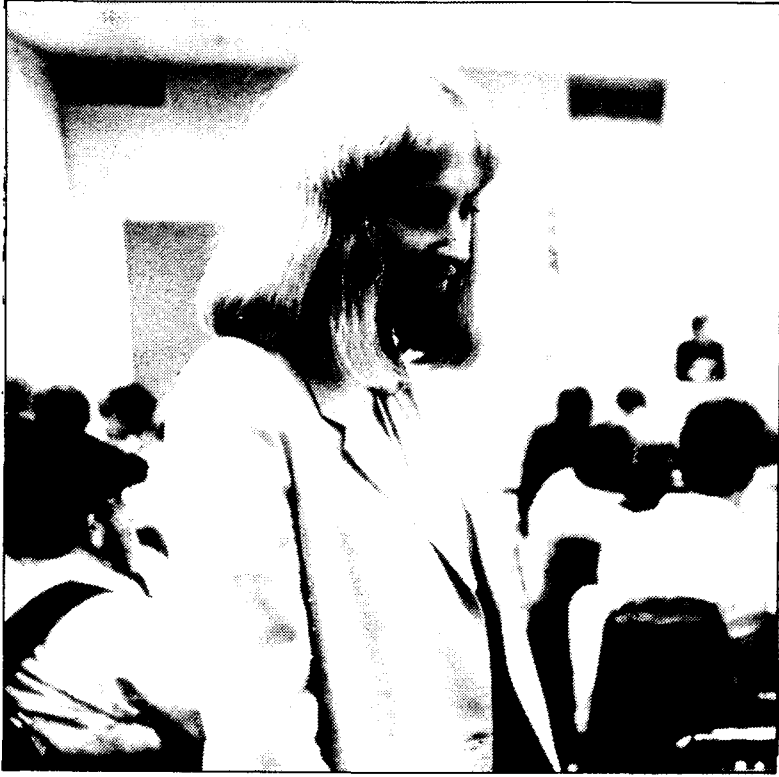
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# INSIDE LABOR



Linda Gregg, top officer in the Denver Local 435.

## Ten-year fight to reform Teamsters

By David Moberg

On its tenth anniversary Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) had reasons to celebrate and to mourn. It has proven itself as a voice for democracy and militance, but its union—still plagued by corruption and autocracy—is on the skids. The tough, tenacious reform group has not only survived but continued to grow, reaching nearly 9,000 dues-paying members and holding approximately 30 local elected offices. One of the newest, Linda Gregg, now the top officer in the 4,500-member Denver Local 435, was forced into a second election last summer and not only won by a wider margin but also brought in her whole slate, who had lost in the first round.

But TDU's influence is far more pervasive than those numbers indicate. Last summer it was the galvanizing force leading to an 81 percent rejection of Teamster president Jackie Presser's car hauler contract. The car haulers' subsequent three-week strike forced improvements, although the contract still included unpopular concessions. Last spring Presser's master freight agreement covering what remains of the dwindling unionized freight-trucking industry included a two-tier wage system. It squeaked to a narrow 53-47 majority, the worst margin ever for a regular freight contract. (In 1983 TDU helped defeat a mid-contract concession by more than a two-thirds vote.)

Even in losing votes, TDU lawsuits have helped expand membership rights. For example, they have won court orders permitting dues-paying casual workers to vote on contracts, requiring that contract ratification procedures offer an "informed and meaningful" ballot and guaranteeing mail ballots for members in a local spread over three states. Now in a strike against two important food processors in Watsonville, Calif., TDU rank-and-file members have emerged as the union's real leaders. They have forced a strike despite elected local officers' reluctance to fight unilaterally imposed concessions on the largely Hispanic workforce.

But TDU has to fight not only the companies but also its own union leadership. Now the master freight agreement is rapidly being undermined by the abuse of "worker ownership" plans. The fourth and fifth largest national carriers as well as many regional firms have pressured workers individually to sign up for Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) that typically have very undemocratic structures. Workers give back 12-18 percent of their pay for stock that is nearly worthless. For example, McLean Trucking's own ESOP prospectus shows workers giving up \$98 for each share of stock the company values at \$1.55 to \$2. In some cases, conglomerate owners are moving to own all real assets and lease them to the trucking firms, potentially setting them up for failure and a shift of work to non-union operations (while protecting the assets from creditors). Since Teamster local and international officials are remaining silent on this gutting of the contract, TDU is searching—so far with little success—for a way to resist.

When the Teamsters convene in Las Vegas next May, Jackie Presser will have a poor record to present—rotten and rejected contracts, declining membership and faltering organizing efforts, including typographical union members' rebuff of a merger bid. Many of his friends at the top may be most upset that he apparently used his hitherto secret role as an FBI informer to oust his predecessor, Roy Williams, convicted of attempting to bribe former Sen. Howard Cannon. And some folks in the Mafia may be displeased as well. A former top organized crime leader in Cleveland has reportedly told

the FBI that when Chicago and Kansas City mob bosses objected to Presser taking over the union, they were told by Cleveland mob leader Milton Rockman not to worry, since he "would control Presser." Presser escaped indictment for his role in a \$275,000 fraud of Teamster funds used to pay "ghost employees" in his local, supposedly because the FBI knew and approved the misuse of the money. (Now TDU wants to know who is going to pay back the members' dues money.)

TDU decided at their convention the first weekend in October to gather 500,000 signatures (out of a union of roughly 1.6 million) on petitions demanding that members elect their own president. They had petitioned the Labor Department to change its rule permitting local union officials—often elected as much as three years earlier and with different goals on the minds of the members—to serve automatically as convention delegates. Although the Labor Department rejected their request that all delegates be elected specifically for the convention no more than 120 days in advance, TDU may take the department to court.

## AFSCME strong in unionizing drive

In the free-for-all battle to represent the 45,000 Ohio state employees made eligible by legislation passed in 1984, the initial round of voting showed a split decision. The lead contender, AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) won an uncontested unit of inspectors and regulators and came in second for a run-off with Communications Workers for a maintenance unit. But the Food and Commercial Workers beat AFSCME for a unit of state liquor store workers and the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees won with a group of mental health workers. The Fraternal Order of Police and the National Education Association also each won uncontested units. The Teamsters, once considered potential tough competition, have pulled out rather than take a beating.

Although AFSCME predicts that it will win enough to be the largest union in a state once dominated by steel, auto, trucking and other industrial unions, it was not an auspicious start. It has spent \$5 million on a campaign that has used radio and TV extensively as well as traditional techniques, but the tactics seem to be working better in Illinois, another recently opened organizing plum where AFSCME is winning heavily.

This week, in the second of three balloting rounds, AFSCME once again faces off against the Hospital Workers for two units of 7,600 mental health and retardation workers. The battle for these workers earlier provoked charges by AFSCME that the Hospital Workers were soliciting its already signed-up members and officers in violation of Article 20 of the AFL-CIO constitution preventing raiding among member unions. The Hospital Workers claim that they didn't know it was illegal. After AFSCME protested, the Hospital Workers stopped the practice and eventually filed a petition without AFSCME members included. But the AFL-CIO ordered the Hospital Workers off the ballot. They refused to leave, so the federation notified other unions that Hospital Workers were no longer protected against raids. Later the AFL-CIO instituted a new policy that explicitly made competition free when a new state law opens up organizing.

Hospital Workers Executive Vice-President Bob Muehlenkamp argued that the sanctions were unfair, unprecedented and contrary to the new policy. But the 75,000-member union had already sunk \$1 million in its campaign (a figure that may be doubled by the time contracts are negotiated) and was determined to stay. Muehlenkamp is convinced that its rank-and-file committee organizing approach and stress on union democracy and membership participation will win the day. AFSCME spokesman Phil Sparks thinks their appeal on issues such as career ladders, pay equity and stress, in addition to bread and butter concerns, will win out.

## Will blacks, women rise in AFL-CIO?

The Ohio battle could take on larger dimensions. At the AFL-CIO's biennial convention later this month, three executive board slots will be open. There has been a strong sense that the federation needs more blacks and women at the top. Flight Attendant President Linda Puchala, who has impressed many in the past year, is a likely contender as a woman representative. Henry Nicholas, president of the Hospital Workers, is the only black union president not on the board (where Frederick O'Neal of Associated Actors and Artistes and Barbara Hutchinson, director of the Government Employees' women's department are the only blacks). He is the natural candidate.

But Nicholas and his union have a political tradition of opposition to U.S. military spending and overseas adventurism. That does not sit well with many leaders in the AFL-CIO, which has recently sent its top international affairs representatives around the country holding closed meetings to shore up support for its Central America policy. Although presidents of unions under sanction for Article 20 violations have sat on the executive board for many years, the Ohio controversy could be used by some as a weapon against Nicholas. But AFSCME would be in a bad position to do that, since it has a large black membership, a black secretary-treasurer, Bill Lucy, who is head of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (and a potential executive board nominee himself if it were not for the tradition of naming union presidents), and political positions much like the Hospital Workers.

If political maneuverings affected the executive board choice, it would not be the first time. When Barbara Hutchinson was nominated, many black unionists felt that United Food and Commercial Workers Vice-President Addie Wyatt, a founder of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, was the natural black woman candidate if only she had not been deemed too far left by some guardians of political rectitude.



# IN THESE TIMES

The Independent  
Socialist Newspaper

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657, (312) 472-5700

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

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By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

**T**HE MYTH OF THE BIG BAD BEAR about to eat West Europe all up is stronger today here than in any other European capital. And Paris was the stage chosen by Mikhail Gorbachov to start to demolish the myth by appearing as a European among Europeans.

In his October 3 speech at the French National Assembly, Gorbachov said important things about Euromissiles, French nuclear forces, chemical weapons, SS-20s, the need for new ways of thinking about military and environmental problems and the accusation that the USSR wants to drive a wedge between Western Europe and the U.S. *Le Monde* noted that "in other times," a single one of Gorbachov's proposals would have been enough to make headlines. French commentators seemed embarrassed to hear a Soviet leader saying things that sounded undeniably sensible, preferring to exercise their critical skill on Raissa Gorbachov's wardrobe.

Certainly Gorbachov didn't expect to accomplish miracles in France, where anti-Soviet passion is at an all-time high. But Paris fashions change. And Gorbachov was indirectly addressing the rest of Europe as well.

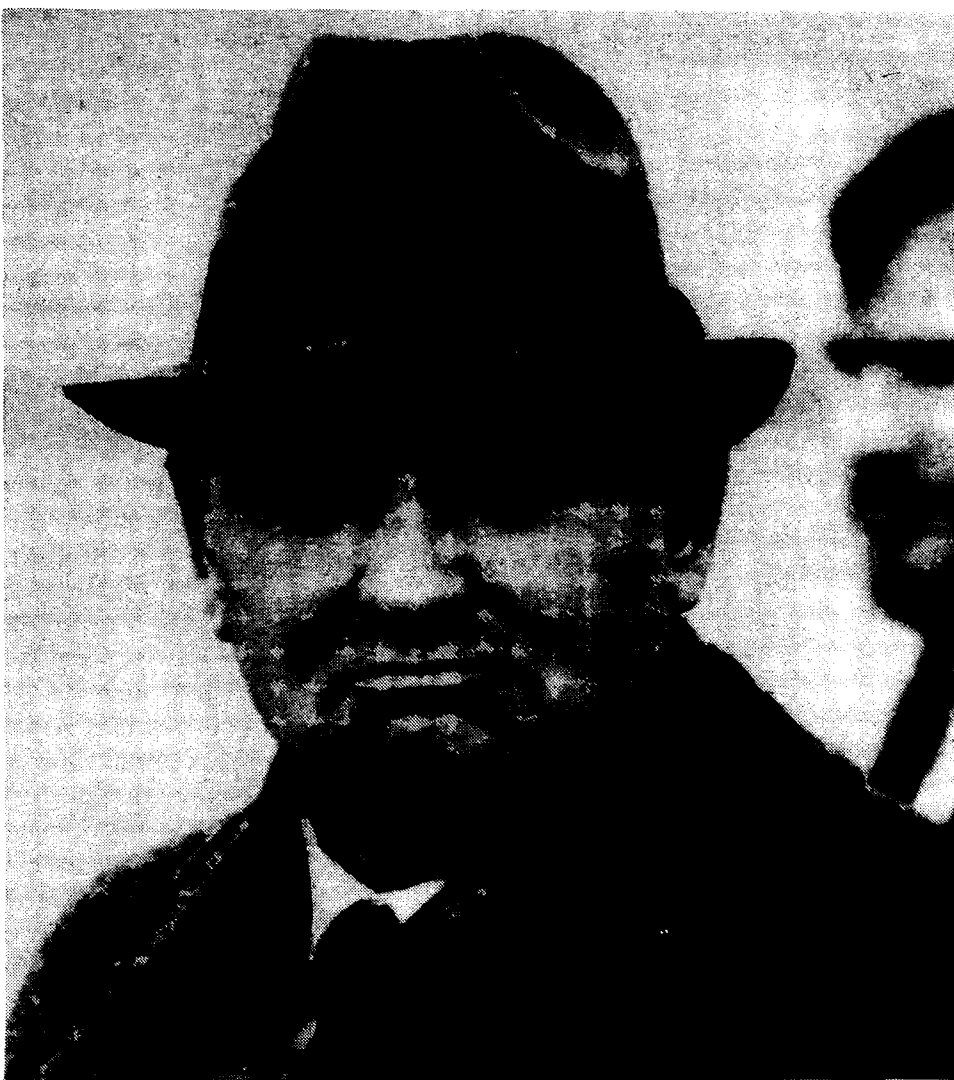
In his main Paris speech, Gorbachov proposed reducing armed forces and armaments on both sides in Central Europe, starting with a reduction of Soviet and American forces, with larger reductions on the Soviet side. Soviet negotiators in Geneva had earlier presented a proposal to the Americans for a 50 percent cut in strategic nuclear missiles. Gorbachov followed this up with an offer of a separate agreement for rapid mutual reduction of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe, apart from the problem of strategic or space weapons. This implies that a Soviet-American deadlock on Star Wars need not hold up agreement on reducing arms in Europe.

During the next few days, Reagan administration spokesmen seemed to be scrambling to find reasons to reject the Russian proposals. National Security advisor Robert McFarlane said the Soviet 50 percent proposal was unfair. Because it didn't cover the SS-20s, it would force the U.S. to "choose between defending itself or its allies." It was the U.S. side, however, that insisted on dividing the current Geneva negotiations into three parts (space or "Star Wars," strategic and medium-range European theater), and between the U.S. and the USSR, "strategic" has always been defined as weapons aimed by one at the territory of the other.

It was the Reagan administration, not the Russians, that rejected dealing with the various categories of weapons in a single global negotiation, because of its desire to protect "Star Wars" from any possible bargaining. Thus it is in keeping with the accepted negotiating categories for the USSR to include the American Pershing II and cruise missiles targeted on Russia in its strategic arms reduction proposal, while suggesting a separate agreement on European medium-range weapons that would include the Soviet SS-20s threatening Western Europe.

McFarlane and others accused the Soviet leader of trying to "drive a wedge" between the U.S. and its European allies. But chief Soviet arms negotiator Yuri Kvitsinski explained to Western journalists in Paris that they couldn't have it both ways. "The U.S. maintains at the negotiating table that it speaks for all of you. But then it says it can't speak for Great Britain or France as soon as the nuclear weapons of those two countries come up." In the past, when Soviet negotiators have sought to include French and British nuclear forces in the Western balance, the French have responded indignantly that their nuclear forces are independent and cannot be included in superpower negotiations.

Gorbachov noted that the British and French nuclear forces, currently being



Der Spiegel

## Gorbachov's chilly reception in France

modernized, are growing rapidly and "we can no longer shut our eyes to them. The French side indicates that France's nuclear forces cannot be discussed without their participation. That is reasonable. Thus it is time to begin a direct discussion between us on this subject and try to find an acceptable outcome by joint efforts." The Soviet Union is ready for such a direct discussion with both France and Britain, he said.

The Soviet leader took pains to emphasize that "we will be very careful to take into account France's security interests. And today, so we think, the question does not arise of reducing those armaments." This suggested a certain acceptance of the French view that nuclear disarmament must start with the overarmed superpowers and certainly not with France's "minimal" deterrent.

At their joint press conference the next day, President Francois Mitterrand hastened to fend off Gorbachov's advances. Mitterrand "didn't think it would be reasonable" to envisage Franco-Russian negotiations on nuclear arms in Europe. "France has practically no margin—her problem is to stay above the threshold of nuclear effectiveness and credibility," he said.

Certainly France, in its present mood, would not consider reducing its deterrent force of nuclear missiles targeted on the USSR. But the current French modernization includes an expanding arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons ostensibly earmarked for use in Germany. And France cannot go on indefinitely both integrating its nuclear arms for the defense of Germany and claiming that they are of no concern to anyone but France. They would come up in any effort to establish a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe.

Gorbachov's speech also had a message for the Dutch, whose government hinted last year that it might decide to reject U.S. cruise missiles to be deployed in Holland if at decision time—next month—the USSR had deployed no more missiles than the June 1984 level. Although the Soviets did continue building up their SS-20 force in response to U.S. Pershing II and cruise deployments, on April 7 Gorbachov announced a six-month moratorium on SS-20

deployment. In Paris he specified that there are now 243 operational SS-20 missiles stationed in the "European zone" (that is, within range of targets in Western Europe), precisely the June 1984 level. The Soviet leader added that the extra missiles had been dismantled—not transferred to Asia—and that their stationary installations would be dismantled within the next two months.

In his unusually complete rundown on Soviet missiles—which matches published U.S. intelligence reports—Gorbachov remarked that "our counter-measures aimed at the territory of the U.S. itself remain in effect." It seems that with Gorbachov in charge, Moscow has decided that it is smarter and more logical to direct its "counter-measures" to the U.S.-controlled Euromissiles against the U.S. itself rather than against Western Europe.

*Le Monde* noted the absence of "the slightest allusion to a stop to French nuclear tests" and assumed Gorbachov had judged that the subject would be "improper" after the Greenpeace incident. This is not quite accurate, however. Gorbachov recalled that his government had stopped all nuclear explosions and called on the U.S. to do the same. "Naturally, we address that appeal to the other nuclear powers," he added.

Gorbachov also spoke of the "more and more imperative need to ban chemical weapons completely and get rid of the stocks." He said he was convinced that "it is perfectly possible to agree on reliable checkups." Gorbachov argued: "If we succeeded in reaching an understanding on non-dissemination of nuclear weapons, why not apply the same method to chemical weapons as well?" That would be a step toward total prohibition, he suggested. The Soviet Union is ready to help draw up an international accord on non-proliferation of chemical weapons, and is also ready to do everything possible to establish a chemical weapons free zone in Central Europe, according to Gorbachov.

He recently held long talks with West German Social Democratic Party (SPD) leader Willy Brandt. There is a certain accord with SPD ideas both in Gorbachov's specific arms proposals—as with chemical weapons free zone in Central Europe—and

**Gorbachov spoke of the "more and more imperative need to ban chemical weapons completely."**

in his more general statements, which seemed to fall on deaf ears in France but will be listened to with interest elsewhere.

### Common ground

In suggesting "new forms of cooperation and work in common" between East and West, and specifically with the European Economic Community and with the European Parliament, Gorbachov especially stressed environmental problems, acid rain and river and sea pollution. The Soviet leader confessed that "we have probably all acted without sufficient foresight in creating problems that are no longer capable of being solved today within the national framework. Here is just the field where everyone should become aware of the indivisible character of our continent."

He said that "security in Europe cannot be ensured by military means, by armed force. This is a totally new situation which means a break with traditions, ways of thinking and acting formed over the course of centuries, even millenia. The human mind does not manage to adapt immediately to everything that is new. This is true for everyone. We feel it, we have started to rethink many established values, including in military matters and, obviously, in politics, to make them conform entirely to new realities. We would like to see the same process in Western Europe and beyond."

Meanwhile, he said, one of the obstacles preventing war remains "fear of unacceptable punishment. However, we are aware that it is impossible to build a durable peace solely on fear. The whole question is where to seek an alternative to fear or, to use a military term, to deterrence?"

Gorbachov spoke of the need to overcome the division of Europe into blocs and even claimed to take human rights seriously, adding that it was important to "free that problem from all hypocrisy and speculation, from attempts to meddle in the internal affairs of other countries." In an earlier TV interview, he had answered at length on the human rights question, indicating that adversaries of the Soviet Union may be about to lose their monopoly of words on the subject.

He made special mention of Canada's potential contribution to solving dangerous regional conflicts and denied that his European policy was anti-American. "The viewpoint that by improving our relations with Western Europe we seek to drive a wedge and put her at odds with U.S. seems absurd. First, we want good relations not only with Western Europe, but also with the U.S., as, moreover, with China, Japan and other countries. We do not practice a Metternich-style 'balance of forces' policy seeking to set states against each other, setting up blocs and counter-blocs, creates 'axes' and 'triangles,' but a policy of global detente, worldwide security and international cooperation. Secondly, we are realistic and we know how solid are the historical, political and economic links uniting Western Europe and the U.S."

The Soviet premier received a chilly reception in France. The media and demonstrators harped on the Gulag, and the only friendly welcome came from the enfeebled French Communist Party, whose leader Georges Marchais tagged along, looking sheepish as Gorbachov and his wife Raissa toured the apartment Lenin once inhabited in Paris.

Still, at their final press conference, Mitterrand told Gorbachov, "You are the first leader of the Soviet Union to have recognized in this Europe of the Community [the EEC] a political entity. Why not imagine that we can gradually, by ways it is too soon to describe, go towards a broader European practice?" Mitterrand also recalled France's historical and cultural ties to the smaller countries of Eastern Europe.

If there is really, at long last, a spark of imagination in the Kremlin, it cannot fail to stimulate Europe. ■



# INSHORT

Beth Maschinot

## Ciba's old soft shoe

Ciba-Geigy, a Swiss multi-national company, has been sidestepping the damage done by two of its most popular anti-arthritic pain killers—Tandearil and Butazolidin—for several years now. The two drugs (brand names for oxyphenbutazone and phenylbutazone) are known to cause life-threatening disorders including leukemia, gastro-intestinal bleeding, peptic ulcers and liver damage. According to a recent article in the *Multinational Monitor*, the scientific evidence is backed by Ciba's own admission in a 1982 internal memo that the drugs had killed more than 1,000 people and injured 5,000 more (a conservative estimate, according to health groups monitoring the drugs). Earlier this year, the Health Action International joined with other groups calling for a worldwide ban on the two drugs.

What's a company to do? Well, in Ciba's case a bit of the old soft shoe was in order. Ciba officials (who characterize the two drugs as "essentially one and the same") decided to drop Tandearil—the less profitable of the two—and put their marketing weight behind Butazolidin. They then revised the package inserts in Butazolidin—a "very, very costly" move, according to one official—by recommending it only in the treatment of a few severe rheumatic diseases after all other drugs had failed. Tandearil, though withdrawn from U.S. markets, was never recalled from hospital or pharmacy shelves, since, as a Ciba spokesperson said, "it was not a mandated withdrawal."

Ciba's steps to safety, limited though they are, have not been duplicated in underdeveloped countries. According to the *Monitor*, the two drugs are still widely prescribed to people in Malaysia, for example, for "pain and stiffness in muscles and joints, lumbago, tension headaches, virus infections and fever." And in the U.S. and Europe, Ciba has found a convenient scapegoat for the drugs' destructiveness: "It's not a drug of first choice. It never was, but physicians give things inappropriately. They were giving it to people with sprained ankles, really misusing it. That's what caused the problems."

## Cat and mouse

While you were sleeping one night last week, one of your neighbors may have been tracking a suspected nuclear weapons convoy. During "H Bomb Awareness Week"—the first eight days of October—hundreds of people converged on nuclear weapons plants waiting for the unmarked trucks that carry their cargo to military bases. After those first sightings at the weapons plants, the Nukewatch nerve center in Oklahoma dispatched pursuit vehicles to keep tabs on the trucks. According to Nukewatch, last week's observations netted 14 convoys that were followed for 4,500 miles.

"Truckwatching" has become a noble pursuit among British peace activists, and the year-old truckwatching brigades in the U.S. are loosely based on Britain's successful Cruisewatch effort. In the last year, Nukewatch has produced a packet of how-to's, including how to spot the unmarked trucks and how to keep harassment from the Department of Energy to a minimum. The trucks—whose distinguishing characteristics include unusual antennas and broad safety stripes on the back of the trailers—are usually built by the Marmon Co. and are escorted by unmarked cars, most often Chevy Suburbans. The DoE has become increasingly annoyed by the truckwatchers: it's recently tried to foil them by changing the markings on the trucks. And last week weapons convoy commanders reportedly were given Nukewatch strategy print-outs and some weapons plants deployed decoy convoys in an attempt to shake their pursuers.

Nukewatch has no plans at this time to attempt to stop a convoy, preferring to foster a broad public awareness by truck-watching. "People feel the arms race is remote, distant and complex," says Nat Batchelder of Nukewatch. "But if you've got a truck going through a town in the middle of the night, you've got something that will anger people and, hopefully, be an impetus in organizing them." For a truckwatching instruction book, write Nukewatch, 315 W. Gorham, Madison, WI 53703.

## Terrorism's design

The assassination and hostage-takings in the Mideast are not always as random as they seem. Some of them are part of the clandestine war waged between various



*Said to be the first monument in the U.S. dedicated to peace, the inauguration of the Peace Pagoda in Levenshew, Japan, drew a large crowd from around the world. The pagoda was built in the tradition of the Most Honorable Prince of Wales, a Japanese Buddhist monk who has overseen the construction of 70 Peace Pagodas in the landings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More than 500 Americans helped build the pagoda, with construction beginning in May 1982.*

**Dr. Wendy Orr**, an South African surgeon who reported widespread police brutality against political detainees in that country last month, has been given "other duties" that will keep her from seeing prisoners that are held under South Africa's state of emergency. A spokesman for South Africa's National Union for

Democracy said she has been removed from her normal duties and assigned to "other duties" because she has been "found to be a member of the anti-apartheid struggle." Orr, who is a member of the South African Women's Union, said she has been "found to be a member of the anti-apartheid struggle."

who praised her "courage and leadership."

**The Bureau of Justice Statistics** recently released a report citing a record number of Americans behind bars this year. By the end of '85, half a million people in the U.S. will be in prison, up from 400,000 in 1980. The report also noted that the number of Americans in prison has increased by South Africa and the Soviet Union.

**The Irish National Caucus** has mounted a campaign to block a proposed British-American extradition

treaty aimed at stripping political immunity from suspected terrorists who operate in Northern Ireland and seek refuge in the U.S. (See 177, Sept. 11). The Irish Republican lobbying group, based in Washington, has sent a direct mail package to 250,000 Irish-Americans attacking the treaty and urging them to contact their congressmen to vote against the proposed accord. The outside of the envelope bears the words "The British are coming, the British are coming," while the inside asserts that "The British are indeed coming, this time to the U.S., and it is here that we must meet and beat them."

secret services, reports Diana Johnstone.

Thus the *Daily Telegraph* of London writes that the woman murdered aboard a yacht in the port of Larnaca on September 25 by Palestinian terrorists was Silvia Rafael, a "legendary figure of Mossad," the Israeli secret service. This murder was officially avenged by the Israel raid on PLO headquarters outside Tunis six days later, which killed 73 people. Rafael, 50, a native of South Africa, was in Cyprus to hunt Palestinian agents and not for a pleasure cruise, according to reports. The Abu Dhabi newspaper *Al Hittihad* added that a deputy director of Mossad, his wife and Mossad's European operations director were also aboard the yacht but escaped assassination.

Maxim Ghilan, editor of the Paris-based *Israel & Palestine Political Report*, has noted that the passengers on the TWA Cairo-Athens-Rome flight hijacked on June 14 reportedly separated from the others because they had "Jewish sounding names" did not in fact have particularly Jewish sounding names (Chinton Suggs, Stewart Dahl, Kurt Carlson, Tony Watson, Kenneth Bowen, Jeffrey Ingalls, Richard Herzberg, Robert Trautmann, Robert Brown). Ghilan has speculated that they were held separately in some secret place because the hijackers suspected that among them were senior U.S. intelligence executives they had been tipped off would be aboard that TWA flight. If so, this hypothesis would explain the Reagan administration's restraint in dealing with the terrorists.

## Buying into the brothel

Horatio Alger, eat your heart out. A modern-day dream of American business success is being played out with the attempted takeover of the Mustang Ranch—Nevada's most successful brothel—by 300 investors, most of them from Orange County, Calif. Orange County is known for its conservative law-and-order politics—and for rich businessmen who won't let petty

moralism get in the way of a dollar sign. Forty prostitutes working at the Mustang are also thinking about "putting all of their assets" into what could become Mustang Ranch stock, according to a recent article in the *Los Angeles Times*.

The deal worked out by John B. Davis Sr., chief among the shareholders of Strong Point, Inc., and brothel owner Joe Conforte, on behalf of himself and his madam-wife, is, according to the *Times*, "one of the most unique in the history of American companies whose shares are publicly traded." If all goes according to plan, everyone connected with the Mustang will be moving up a rung on the ladder of success. The Confortes will receive \$8 million for their portion of the 440-acre complex (a nephew will retain ownership of the establishment). Davis and his investors expect to make a bundle out of what he calls the "Taj Majal of the business." Even the federal treasury will profit: the IRS is due to get \$10 million in overdue payment of the Confortes' back taxes and penalties. (Conforte had spent most of 1984 in jail but was finally released in December after plea-bargaining in a case against a U.S. District judge accused of bribery.) But that happy ending depends on Strong Point's Davis being able to drum up the necessary \$18 million.

And like the American dream, the moral good will follow the financial returns. Davis, echoing the conviction of his wife, who is a psychologist and a registered nurse, thinks that a lot of rapes, molestations and incest could be avoided if prostitution "gained wider acceptance as an industry." And who better to oversee the kingpin of the industry if not law-abiding, free-market Orange County types?

As for Conforte—he's been mellowed by 30 years in the business and is looking forward to what promises to be an active retirement. "Each person in life, God made them for certain things," he philosophizes. "I'm good at two things: running one of these places, and I'm good at politics, too."

*This week's contributor: Ruth Harmer-Carew*



By Roger Kerson

## UITENHAGE, SOUTH AFRICA

**I**N THE EARLY HOURS OF AUGUST 28, South African security forces arrested John Gomomo at his home here. He was being taken in for questioning, the police told him, in accordance with South Africa's security laws that permit warrantless arrests and detention without trial for indefinite periods.

Pre-dawn arrests are a fact of life for activists in South Africa. More than 2,000 people have been detained since the government declared a state of emergency on July 21. About half of them have been released, but the rest will remain behind bars until the government is good and ready to let them go. With little or no legal recourse, friends and supporters use petitions, prayer vigils and consumer boycotts to pressure the authorities.

Fortunately for Gomomo, his friends had a more powerful weapon to use on his behalf: they were able to stop production at a major industrial facility.

Gomomo is a shop steward at Volkswagen auto factory in Uitenhage and a vice president of the 20,000-member National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU). He was arrested along with several other senior shop stewards from the Volkswagen plant. Police wanted to question them, Gomomo recalls, about their trade union activism.

"We had to tell them that we couldn't answer any questions about our union without a mandate from our members," he says with a smile. "So they said they would have to keep us locked up for a few weeks."

Meanwhile, one of Gomomo's neighbors, also a Volkswagen worker, spread the word at the plant about the arrest of the union officials. In response, the 3,000-strong black workforce put down their tools and went outside for a mass meeting. They would not return to work, they told management, until the imprisoned union leaders were released.

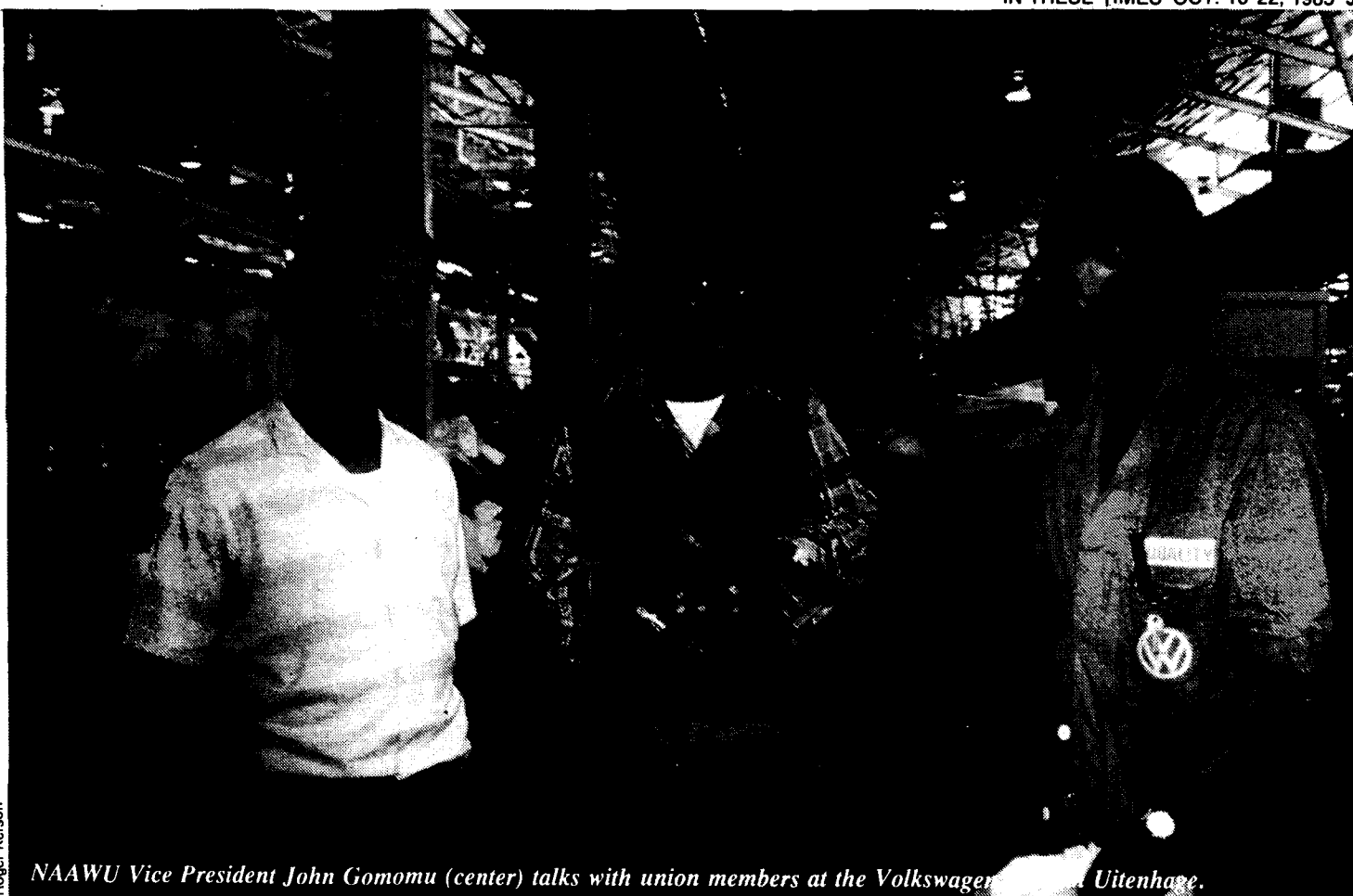
At police headquarters the detained unionists overheard a conversation between officers and Volkswagen executives. The iron fist of the South African legal system relaxed shortly afterward and Gomomo and his colleagues joined a cheering crowd at the factory at 9:30 a.m.—less than six hours after they had been arrested.

The aborted attempt to detain a group of labor officials demonstrates the growing power and militancy of South Africa's independent black trade unions. With most opposition groups under constant attack by the government—virtually the entire leadership of the United Democratic Front, for example, is in detention, awaiting trial or in hiding, and several people have been mysteriously murdered—trade unions are one of the few remaining above-ground outlets for black resistance.

Powerful black unions are a relatively new phenomenon in South Africa. They received official sanction six years ago and have enjoyed tremendous growth since then, now claiming more than half a million paid up members. That represents some 20 percent of the black workforce, and the unions have gained a solid foothold in such industries as mining, metalworking, retail trade, automobile manufacture and food processing.

After black unions were recognized in 1979, unions belonging to the two major labor federations—the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA)—at first kept a low-profile on non-factory political issues, focusing instead on workplace organizing. But with their trade union base solidly established, both federations are participating actively in the current explosion of political activity.

In the summer of 1984, FOSATU sent organizers door-to-door in the Eastern Cape, urging colored and Indian voters to boycott elections for the discredited tricameral parliament. In November, several unions participated in a student-initiated, two-day stay away in the Transvaal region near Johannesburg. This year FOSATU and several independent unions have joined other opposition organizations in calling for



NAAWU Vice President John Gomomo (center) talks with union members at the Volkswagen Uitenhage.

## SOUTH AFRICA

# Union politics split apartheid economy

consumer boycotts to protest the detention of political prisoners and the continuing state of emergency.

"There's no way we can divorce ourselves from the popular struggle," says Chris Dlamini, president of FOSATU. "It emanates from the fact that people don't have the right to vote—that our people do not have equal access to the wealth of this country, even though we pay taxes.... Trade unions are the only platform we've got."

Although Dlamini is one of South Africa's most important leaders, he still spends each day as a full-time shop steward in a Kellogg's cereal plant in Springs, a small city about an hour outside of Johannesburg.

The emerging black unions are run on

bers. The new federation is the result of four years of negotiations, which began in 1981 when black unions gathered to decide on a coordinated response to the government's labor reforms. The unity talks have been stormy at times, and some of the differences within the black labor movement parallel similar disagreements between competing opposition political organizations.

Now that the dust has settled, it appears that the new federation will include FOSATU and several major independent unions. CUSA has dropped out, following a dispute over the question of black leadership. CUSA subscribes to the Black Consciousness philosophy, which sees the black working class as the vanguard of the

strong effort will be made to create a single affiliate for every major industry.

The federation's leaders are convinced that strong, single-industry unions are the only effective means to combat the growing power of South Africa's major employers. The South African economy, like that of many other industrialized nations, is becoming ever more concentrated. A single corporation, Anglo American, controls more than 50 percent of the companies traded on the Johannesburg stock exchange.

Oddly enough, at a time when the independent black trade unions are escalating their struggle against the government, the same large corporations that do their best to defeat black workers on the industrial front are suddenly painting themselves as supporters of black political aspirations.

"Apartheid is dead," says Anton Rupert, head of the Rembrandt Corporation and one of the nation's leading Afrikaaner businessmen, "and the corpse must be buried, not embalmed."

The Anglo American Corporation has gone so far as to call for the release of imprisoned African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela, and it was Anglo American's chairman, Gavin Relly, who organized the recent talks between



Shop stewards from the Volkswagen Uitenhage plant

the principle of "worker control." Only active workers can serve as union officers, and officers cannot speak on behalf of members without receiving a specific mandate from the rank and file. Accountability is enforced with an effective shop steward system, creating democratic unions with broad-based popular support.

## New federation

The black union movement will take another step forward in November with the formation of a new, enlarged federation expected to have more than 400,000 mem-

ber liberation struggle and insists on black leadership for black organizations.

FOSATU and the independent unions joining the new federation, by contrast, follow a policy of non-racialism. In South Africa's twisted political lexicon, non-racial organizations are those that are open to members of all races and that specifically welcome liberal whites in the struggle against apartheid. Whites hold key staff positions in several non-racial unions.

According to its draft constitution, the as-yet-unnamed federation will be based on the principle of industrial unionism and a

## Two recent polls show that more than 70 percent of urban blacks favor economic sanctions or divestment to pressure the Pretoria regime.

businessmen and exiled ANC leaders in Ambia.

## Strange bedfellows

It is undeniably strange to see prominent capitalists behave like seasoned anti-apartheid campaigners, taking out full-page ads calling for reform and jetting off to Lusaka over government objections. But their behavior becomes more understandable in light of the severe economic pressures being caused by South Africa's current political crisis.

Despite world-wide condemnation of apartheid, South Africa has remained, up until this year, a good place to do business. A spokesman for the American Chamber of Commerce in South Africa, for example, proudly told *In These Times* that invest-

*Continued on next page*



Continued from preceding page

ments in South Africa earned an average return of 15 percent, as compared to 10 percent in the U.S. and 8.5 in Great Britain. But that picture is changing by the minute for the following reasons:

- The administration of apartheid requires high government expenditure, and therefore high taxes, which can no longer be easily supported by business interests, now that black unions have pushed up the cost of black labor.

- The substandard living conditions of most black workers, and the restrictions on their movement imposed by the pass laws and the influx control system, are becoming a major impediment to creating a stable, productive workforce. Leading industrial concerns realized long ago that many aspects of apartheid are incompatible with modern capitalism's needs. Black workers must be "free," so to speak, so they can be more properly exploited.

- Political instability in South Africa is beginning to destroy the South African economy. The government suspended repayment of foreign loans this summer to head off an impending financial collapse, but business leaders are acutely aware that the economy will not function normally again until the country's political problems are resolved.

- The recent surge of activism by business leaders relates not only to economic difficulties, but also to an undeniable political fact: sooner or later, apartheid will fall. South African businessmen would like to make sure that capitalism doesn't crumble along with it.

"...The free enterprise system," warns a worried A.M. Rosholt, executive chairman of Barlow Rand Ltd., "is threatened by the fact that the majority of blacks are not supporters of capitalism. They identify capitalism with the overall political system, which they reject." Rosholt's solution is for businessmen to speak out more forcefully for the need for reform and to take steps to guarantee that blacks "enjoy their

fair share of the fruits of the system."

Rosholt's warning may be a classic case of too little, too late, since black workers are not willing to trust their future to the white business community.

"The business people want us to see them as being on our side," says a skeptical Chris Dlamini. "They're very involved in trying to reform certain aspects of the system. They wouldn't mind staging a *coup d'etat* and putting the [white liberal] Progressive Federal Party in power, which would protect their capitalist interests. We have to prevent that. That's why we say workers should lead the struggle."

While business and labor are both presently calling for an end to apartheid, they are obviously at odds over how the post-apartheid society will be structured. Nor can they agree on short-term tactics for bringing about change, one example being the sensitive issue of economic sanctions.

Businessmen, to no one's surprise, argue vociferously against sanctions, claiming that outside pressure on the South African economy will simply add to unemployment among blacks and "hurt those who are supposed to be helped." That argument, of course, has been picked up on this side of the Atlantic by Ronald Reagan.

Fortunately, black workers in South Africa don't seem to have much trouble figuring out who their real friends are. "If the employers are so worried about us," a shop steward said in discussing economic sanctions, "why don't they pay us a living wage."

Two recent opinion polls—by the *London Times* and Community Agency for Social Inquiry—show that more than 70 percent of blacks favor some form of economic sanctions or disinvestment to put pressure on the Pretoria regime. This contradicts the findings of an earlier poll—funded by the U.S. State Department—claiming that a majority of blacks opposed disinvestment. Critics have cited various methodological flaws in the earlier poll, and the climate of opinion may have changed since it was taken more than a year ago.

Labor leaders estimate that far more than 70 percent of blacks are in favor of sanctions. As a matter of policy, most trade unions strongly support divestment campaigns abroad, and international anti-apartheid activities are given significant attention in the labor press. But the black unions stop short of urging foreign companies to withdraw from the country.

"...The pressure for disinvestment has had a positive effect and should not be lessened," says a statement of FOSATU's Executive Council from April 1984. "FOSATU is definitely opposed to foreign investment that accepts the conditions of oppression maintained by this regime..." However, the union notes, the ultimate goal is to "ensure that the factories, machines and buildings presently in South Africa will be retained in South Africa to the ultimate benefit of all."

The bottom line is that South African workers don't want to see foreign companies leave the country with assets that they have helped to create.

"The legal ownership of these assets may rest with foreign companies," says Alec Erwin, FOSATU's education director. "But they have been developed...by the hard work and labor of South African workers. We can see absolutely no sense in handing over part of the social wealth of this country in order to place pressure on this regime."

The desire of South African workers to protect their long-term "social wealth" should not be confused with a reluctance to take short-term economic risks. Black workers have shown repeatedly that they are willing to put their jobs on the line to fight for political change. The Volkswagen workers in Uitenhage—where unemployment is running higher than 30 percent—could all have been fired when they walked off their jobs to demand the release of John Gomomo.

Those same workers took a similar risk in July, when they went on strike to protest Volkswagen's decision to donate a dozen vans to the All-Blacks, a New Zealand

rugby team scheduled for a controversial tour of South Africa. The Volkswagen workers were determined not to let their labor be used to support an event that would have violated the international sports boycott of South Africa, lending credibility to the minority government.

The Uitenhage plant was shut down for several days, and the illegal strike ended only when a New Zealand court case cancelled the All-Blacks' tour.

Workers belonging to the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) have also risked their jobs for political reasons in recent months. CCAWUSA was one of the unions endorsing a boycott of white stores in the Durban area in August. It was called to protest the state of emergency and demand the release of political prisoners. CCAWUSA represents workers at several major retail chains, and if the boycott is successful, as many consumer boycotts have been, one result may be that CCAWUSA members will be laid off.

### Changing the system

Clearly, black workers are not afraid to use their growing economic power, even if they will suffer in the short run. "I'm not talking about a job, or no job," says Chris Dlamini. "I'm talking about changing the system."

Black South Africans have been fighting to change the apartheid system ever since it was introduced almost four decades ago, and the development of independent black unions have given them an important new weapon in their continuing struggle. More than a few policymakers in South Africa must long for the good old days before blacks had strong workplace organizations.

But black unions are here to stay. And they will continue to have an impact on their employers and the state. Just ask the harried executives at Volkswagen or the police in Uitenhage who tried to arrest John Gomomo.

*Roger Kerson recently returned from a three-and-a-half week trip to South Africa.*

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By Michael Tangeman

## MEXICO CITY

"IT'S VERY SAD FOR US MEXICANS that the world has sent so much aid, and all that has arrived for us is aid from individuals," said Raymundo Flores Aldarado, a 34-year-old packer in Mexico City's garment industry.

Nineteen days after the first of two earthquakes struck Mexico City, Flores and co-workers were still waiting for some of the estimated 15,000 tons of foreign aid that the National Emergency Commission said has arrived in Mexico since the September 19 disaster.

"Here in Mexico, we have a very slow bureaucracy," said Flores, "with a lot of red tape that doesn't allow the aid to get through." What Flores didn't mention is what many Mexicans fear—that much of the aid that has arrived for earthquake victims will be siphoned off by the institutionalized corruption that plagues the country.

Since the earthquakes, the government bureaucracy has created a Metropolitan Emergency Commission, the National Emergency Commission and the Supervisory Committee on Donations to the Affected and for Reconstruction of the Affected Zones. The Supervisory Committee is presided over by the Comptroller General's office. All have issued contradictory statements about the amount of aid received by Mexico.

While the Comptroller's Office said 1,088 tons of aid had arrived by October 1, the National Commission has counted 15,000 tons. Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Commission tallied \$380,000 in monetary aid. The U.S. Agency for International Development has released figures that say that as of October 1 Mexico had received \$8 million in foreign aid.

The questions of how much has arrived and where the aid is going have undoubtedly been key in the decisions of non-governmental organizations to set up parallel relief and reconstruction programs. UNICEF, OXFAM, the Catholic Church and even the American and the British Chambers of Commerce in Mexico have all established separate funds from the government's National Reconstruction Fund.

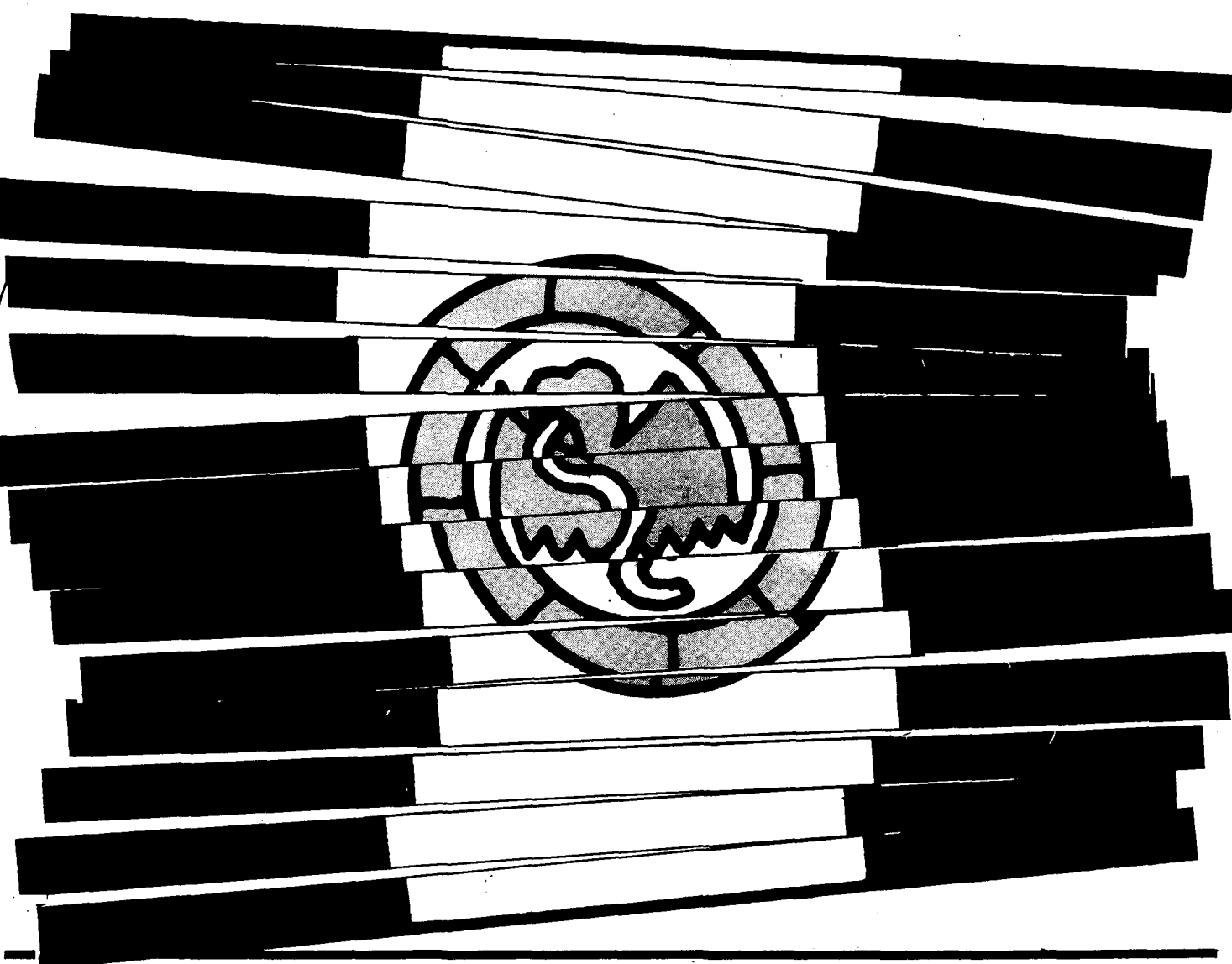
Left opposition parties were key in setting up an alternative reconstruction fund for Mexicans who prefer that their donations do not pass through the bureaucracy's hands. The influential "Group of 100" artists and intellectuals has also pressed for a citizens' committee to monitor the use of money from the official fund.

But for the workers in Mexico City's garment district, it's not only international aid that's been slow in arriving. Workers from Dimension Weld de Mexico, one of several firms that occupied a collapsed 11-story building in the garment district, told *In These Times* that it took 16 days for heavy rescue equipment to arrive—long after hopes for more than 80 workers beneath the rubble had passed. As many as 10 of the multi-story buildings in the garment district collapsed in the quake. According to the workers, they have since been virtually abandoned by both the government and company owners.

"The owner called us together and told us he didn't have any money to pay us with, that he was bankrupt," said 26-year-old Anna Castro, a seamstress at Dimension Weld, a firm that specialized in applying plastic Walt Disney characters to clothing.

According to Raymundo Flores, also a Dimension Weld employee, the workers proposed finishing out their incomplete work week at another factory in order to receive their pay, but the owner wasn't interested. Now, the workers agreed, they probably won't receive any of the wages or severance pay due them.

Mexico's garment industry has long been notorious for sweatshop working conditions, low wages and lack of unionization. According to the workers the average daily wage for 10 hours' work—with time taken off for lunch and restroom breaks—was about \$4.40. Saturdays and Sundays the workers received time-and-a-half pay, said packer Naomi Gomez, but workers have



## MEXICO

# Rampant corruption after quake

virtually no choice regarding overtime work.

"Once, when a group of workers didn't want to work weekends," said seamstress Trinidad Ordonez, "the bosses got mad. They fired half the group as an example to the rest and no one complained any more."

The owners of Dimension Weld and other firms in the garment district now seem to be most concerned with salvaging their equipment from the ruins.

"The owner said he was going to salvage the machinery from the building, sell it and use half the money to pay us," seamstress Castro said. "As they pull out the machinery, they put it in the parking lot over there, and we're keeping an eye on it. If they take it away from here, we'll never be paid anything."

In addition, relatives of workers of the clothing firm Topeka told a reporter for the newspaper *Uno Mas Uno* that the owner was paying rescue workers to spend their time looking for equipment and files belonging to the firm—and not for the bodies of trapped workers. Garment industry owners seem to be following guidelines reportedly suggested by a "labor relations specialist" in a meeting of business leaders two weeks ago. They were counseled to declare bankruptcy in order to avoid severance pay to workers. Many of the workers are married or single mothers with three or four children, noted Castro, and the owners' unwillingness to pay up has left many garment workers destitute.

While the international disaster relief poured into the capital's airport, there was a brief respite from the economic disaster that the country has been living through. After the quakes, Mexico asked for and was granted by its international creditors a six-month suspension on a \$950 million payment on debt principle. The suspension is part of a \$5 billion "rescue plan" that

## Leaders ignored popular demands for suspending debt payment.

the finance secretary negotiated with foreign creditors and lending institutions.

In a telex message to the creditors, the Finance Secretariat cited certain deviations from Mexico's original promise to the IMF, which first became apparent prior to the quake.

"Before the earthquake that hit Mexico on September 19, the financial situation had deteriorated," stated the message, adding that the earthquake "created an immediate demand in relation to our external accounts and also affected our projections for 1986."

The deterioration of the financial situation had been discovered by an IMF technical team that visited Mexico in the first week of September. A high inflation rate, high domestic interest rate and decreased currency reserves due to balance-of-payments problems induced the IMF to announce on September 18 that the \$950 million still remaining of a 1984 \$3.4 billion loan would be suspended.

After the earthquake that struck Mexico the following day, however, the Finance Secretariat was able to convince creditors that, due to the disaster, tourism—a major earner of foreign currency—would drop dramatically and damage to industry would mean a further drop in non-petroleum exports and in import increase. The Finance Secretariat projected only \$4.4 billion dollars in hard currency reserves for the end of the year—down from \$12 billion last year—and it estimated that the country would need an additional \$500 million by the end of this year and \$4 billion more next year.

The result was the \$5 billion rescue plan prepared by the U.S. Treasury, Federal Reserve, the IMF, Mexico's creditors and the Finance Secretariat. In addition to public and private loans, the plan includes a U.S. promise to increase purchases of Mexican petroleum for its strategic reserves and a Mexican promise to sign a 15-month "standby" agreement for IMF monitoring of the country's economy.

Critics here have been quick to point out that the rescue plan does not address a fundamental debt issue and emphasized that the government is using the earthquake as an excuse to borrow further. More important,

suspension of debt interest payments was not announced—a move that opposition leaders and thousands left jobless and homeless by the quake advocate.

As *In These Times* went to press, more announcements regarding the debt problem were expected from the international bankers' meeting in Seoul, South Korea. Yet the rescue plan for Mexico is seen by many here as little relief from either natural or economic disaster.

*Michael Tangeman reports regularly for In These Times from Mexico.*

## Files "buried," torture unearthed

In the earthquake's aftermath, the incidence of "disappearing" files seems to be on the upswing. A big blow to labor organizing in Mexico, especially among independent unions, has been the announcement by Mexico's Arbitration and Conciliation Agency of the "virtual destruction" of collective bargaining, strike and union election files. One newspaper reported, however, that as soon as files were recovered from the rubble, they were sold off to employers at a high price.

All the files on narcotics trafficking investigation in Mexico were also said to have "disappeared"—believe it or not—when the Mexico City Hall of Justice collapsed in the first earthquake. In addition, a clandestine detention center was discovered on the sixth floor of the Justice Building, where the tortured bodies of two Mexicans and four Colombians were found among the ruins. The body of a Mexico City lawyer was also found, allegedly stuffed in the trunk of an automobile in the basement parking lot of the building. An autopsy revealed death by strangulation and showed distinct signs of torture. The Colombian embassy has asked the government for a formal explanation, and a parliamentary investigation has been launched.

—M.T.



By Kurt Jacobsen

TEL AVIV

**I**SRAEL'S NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT, headed by Shimon Peres, is buckling beneath the combined pressures of economic crisis and growing right-wing zealotry. Since the frail coalition between Labor, an alignment of parties led by Peres, and Likud, a coalition of right-wing parties led by Begin's successor Yitzhak Shamir, was established in September 1984 this "across the wall" National Unity government has been caught in a bind created by its policies.

National Unity scrupulously opposes the activities of growing ultra-Zionist movements in the West Bank and Gaza, and will do so at least until Shamir takes over the premiership next fall. But the government's clumsy efforts to cope with economic problems are also contributing to this surge of right-wing demagoguery inside Israel.

"Manifest destiny," biblical claims to a "Greater Israel" by the religious right, along with more secular right-wing arguments—especially in Likud—about military advantages are increasingly appealing to the average Israeli. They are further strengthened when settlement of the occupied territories is presented as a divinely hatched plan to solve economic woes.

The increasing power of Meir Kahane's Kach Party, and its growing international coverage abroad, is one result of this attitude shift. Kahane is slithering upward from the crackpot status most Israelis accorded him in the past. One recent poll found nearly 40 percent of Israeli youth agreeing substantially with his fascist platform, and other polls indicate that his party would now likely add between five and eight seats to Kahane's sole seat in the Knesset if elections were held. Although Kahane is helping split the established right in Israel by competing for support, he is using the economic crisis to intensify the appeal of "simple solutions." Likud members are now tempted to "out-Kahane Kahane."

Despite the attention given to Kahane's rally speeches, the extent of his personal influence and the degree to which he appeals to others than the "already converted" is difficult to gauge. There has always been a substantial right-wing vote for ideologues in Israel to tap. The right's strength was largely consolidated when Menachem Begin's first Likud government took power in 1977.

Begin's Herut Party, the central party in the Likud coalition, continues to claim all of "historical Palestine" on both sides of the Jordan River. Seven Knesset members—four from Likud and three from the ultra-conservative Tehiya Party—were even riled enough recently to occupy a flat in the West Bank city of Hebron protesting the government removal of five Jewish settlers squatting there in violation of a "freeze" on further settlement. The government finally evicted the parliamentarians on August 20 amid great controversy.

### Economic solutions

Since September of last year Peres has duelled with the *Histadrut*—General Federation of Labor, which through a holding company controls 25 percent of national production—over the terms under which job dismissals, wage erosion and spending cuts will be enacted to confront the economic crisis. Peres' task is to cut \$2 billion from a \$12 billion operational budget, damp down inflation—412 percent in the year to March 1985—and substantially reduce the \$5.5 billion trade deficit. Austerity measures include severe cuts in public subsidies for food and transport, delinking of wages to prices and some reduction of military spending. All these efforts strike most deeply at the relatively underprivileged Sephardic population, the numerical majority of Israelis, who are the foundation of Likud support.

From September through July Israeli living standards fell 12 percent, and economists predict that the government's proposed programs will erode living standards an additional 38 percent within a year. Inflation has slowed to slightly under



## ISRAEL

# Extremist forces rise as economy crumbles

15 percent for the month of June, but there was a 22 percent erosion of wages in the July-September quarter. Even allowing for foreseeable concessions, unemployment is expected to rise from 6 percent to double figures by December in a nation where full employment has long been a minimal demand of political consensus. Histadrut spokespersons denounced the government's intentions as "anti-Zionist, amoral and not good economics."

Since the government introduced "emergency stabilization" measures that abrogated all labor-management wage agreements in July, the Histadrut's Trade Union Division has waged a campaign for concessions through selective strike action, all the while threatening a general strike. Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i, a Likud member, agreed in mid-July to modify an initial proposal from 6 percent dismissal of public sector employees to a 3 percent dismissal formula, plus a 3 percent wage erosion. Yet the proposed firings are not expected to have the immediate impact the government seeks, because severance pay

for dismissed workers will offset the savings in salary expenditures.

The process of choosing and announcing who is to be fired has been conducted haphazardly. Demonstrating outside the Knesset in Jerusalem in early July, frantic Public Works Department employees engaged in some unruly antics and chanted "Only Kahane" and "Begin, Begin." On July 28 the Education Ministry director resigned in protest after the government released, without warning, a list of fresh dismissals. The new list counted among those who would be fired the sole supporters of families, parents and widows of soldiers killed in action and victims of illness and disabilities—all usually exempted from dismissal by general guidelines.

The proposed firings will affect from 10,000-14,000 workers whom the government assumes will be reabsorbed into the private sector when a large export push, also fueled by devaluations, gets under way. But Industrialists Association President Eli Hurvitz told Israeli radio that private industry will not be able to absorb the 3 percent dismissed since public service demand for private supply will also fall.

Israeli workers are bearing the brunt of the austerity measures, especially since last year's tax law permitted companies and the self-employed to side-step revenue collectors. "If it is possible to abrogate labor agreements by decree," counter-attacked Histadrut General Secretary Yisrael Kessar, "it is also possible to tax capital speculation." The government is offering tax rebates in exchange for labor union compliance and is haggling over a new tax reform bill designed to increase the corporations tax take. One Likud member viewing the bill retorted during a debate with the Finance Committee chairman that the legislation "will bring in zero" from the loftier strata of Israeli

*Meir Kahane's Kach Party is slithering upward from crackpot status most Israelis accorded it in the past.*

society.

Although the Histadrut has given in to the government on the issue of cost-of-living linkages, it is pressing for adoption of a five-day work week—albeit at reduced wages—in the public sector in order to retain employment levels, and is developing a proposal for enabling the public sector to reallocate personnel to higher priority functions. In return the Histadrut (and the Civil Service Union and Clerical Workers Union) proposed to speed up the sacking procedures, which law stipulates must take at least 90 days, if the government agrees to update to increase expense payments and the preferential benefits for workers choosing voluntary retirement. Kessar hopes to buy time via a blend of foot-dragging negotiations with the government regarding the criteria by which firings will occur, and is wielding the threat of component unions taking their own wildcat actions.

### Roots of the crisis

The current economic crisis is in large part the result of the Likud government's decision in October 1977 to relax foreign exchange and import controls, followed in the run-up to the 1981 elections by a spending spree, with subsidies aimed at the Sephardic population. Living standards rose 16 percent from 1980-83 but remained below inflation and the balance of payments deficit. The economic crisis is largely a result of Israel's foreign policy.

The huge defense budget accounts for 20 percent of GNP (compared to, according to officials, 6 percent in the U.S. and 5 percent in the United Kingdom). The Israeli economy is lopsidedly dependent on arms production, making it necessary to export these products to some repressive regimes and creating a network of internal interests that supports continued spending. Few Israelis recognize this connection or else they believe that any benign change is impossible on the diplomatic front. Discussion, for example, of the economic advantages to be reaped from a regional peace settlement simply doesn't emerge in the wider public debates. There is an element of self-interest here—nearly half the industrial workforce operates in arms production firms. Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin resists any erosion, and a cabinet graced by three former chiefs-of-staff and four former defense ministers will continue to resist any proposal for military spending cuts.

Israel is growing more militarized as the politics of extremes become more dominant. There has been a rash of killings and attacks on Israeli civilians and military personnel in the West Bank towns of Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, Afula and in Gaza (also in East Jerusalem). The government sent crack paratroop units into the occupied zones on September 7, as much to prevent reprisals by belligerent Jewish settlers as to protect the latter. The crackdown on Arabs is likely only to stimulate the cycle of violence, however: Israeli Defense Forces routinely bulldoze the homes of apprehended suspects, have imposed curfews in Arab towns and have shut down an Arab university on the West Bank. Jewish zealots have taken every opportunity to violate the new freeze on Gaza and West Bank settlements in order to provoke the Arab communities.

The July sentencing of Jewish terrorists was, not surprisingly, light considering the crimes: bombings of West Bank mayors, raids on Islamic University, a conspiracy to blow up the Temple Mount and attempted and successful murders. Yitzhak Shamir vociferously advocated a pardon of these "patriots," and another Likud minister reacted by describing the West Bank and Gaza settlements as "part of the Zionist dream." Moshe Arens, Likud minister without portfolio, took the most benign view of the unrepentant killers. After all, he observed, "they didn't do it for personal gain."

**Kurt Jacobsen** is a research associate in the Program on Interdependent Political Economy at the University of Chicago.

**One recent poll found nearly 40 percent of Israeli youths agree with Kahane's fascist political platform.**



By Jeremy Harding

**T**HE OCTOBER 1 ISRAELI AIR STRIKE on Tunis may have buried the tentative plans for Mideast peace, along with some 70 victims, under the rubble of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) buildings. Beyond its effect on hopes for a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian question, the air strike has important implications for Tunisia.

Both of these factors have been obscured by a flurry of rhetoric from the U.S., Israel, the European Economic Community and the Arab states. The combined effect of international reaction, even with many outright condemnations of the attack, has been to hedge the question of Palestinian and PLO legitimacy. The virtuoso military tactics and the range of hardware at Israel's disposal in its conflict with the Palestinians constitute a clear advantage over the PLO, demonstrated by the successful Israeli attack. Yet by far the most effective weapon is Israel's continued denial of its adversary's legitimacy and the ability to bring Washington into line behind such a policy.

That is the raid's real significance. The PLO, and Fatah in particular, have always held that "the armed struggle sows and the political struggle reaps." The current peace initiative based on the Amman Accords—signed in February between King Hussein and Yasir Arafat—represent the chance for some arduous PLO political reaping. A broader base of formal diplomatic recognition and a secure place in negotiations for a Mideast settlement are the main objectives, and the PLO is now nearer to them than it has been for more than a decade. Israel has expressed condemnation, disappointment and hostility in varying degrees as the initiative has made headway.

Ever since the end of the Lebanon war, the PLO has been inching toward the negotiating table under either one suggested framework or another. The Reagan plan of 1982 laid down the terms for a confederation between Jordan and the PLO in the occupied territories. The word "state" was avoided. Instead, there was to be an "entity" and it was to involve Palestinian "self-government" as opposed to "self-determination"—an important distinction to the PLO, for whom "self-determination" plays a key role in the vocabulary of Palestinian demands.

Thus major PLO concessions were involved: no actual Palestinian "state," no self-determination clause. Nonetheless, the PLO approached the plan seriously. The Israelis flatly rejected it, while Washington stated its disapproval to Israel and sat on its hands. Finally the PLO wrote off the plan in the political program of the 16th Palestinian National Council in Algiers two years ago.

From the Palestinian viewpoint, the Amman Accords are a narrowly more acceptable successor to the Reagan plan. They call for the "right of self-determination for the Palestinian people," to be achieved within the context of "the confederated Arab states of Jordan and Palestine."

The central PLO concession remains: no Palestinian state. And the Accords represent what Hussein has repeatedly called "the last chance for peace in the region." The PLO knows that if it participates in multi-lateral talks, as the plan stipulates, its fate will no longer be written into a sub-clause in some other party's bi-lateral

**Israel said it was "retaliating" for the killing of three Israelis in Larnaca, Cyprus.**



Apparently, any Palestinian action can be blamed on the PLO.

## MIDEAST

# Israeli raid on Tunis shoots down diplomatic peace solution

deal with Israel. The prize that the Amman Accords holds for the PLO is official recognition as a result of the negotiating process itself. Any obstacle to engaging the process is simultaneously an obstacle to PLO recognition. The Israeli air strike is just such an obstacle.

All along the initiative has posed serious threats for both Israel and the PLO. And for breakaway Palestinian factions—including Abu Nidal's rebel Fatah element and several guerrilla groupings backed by Syria—the Accords are further evidence of a "liquidationist" trend in the PLO mainstream that appears ready to concede on one issue after another. The divisions between what is now broadly referred to as the National Salvation Front and the PLO leadership has strained the organization to its limits and produced several pledges from rebel groupings to sabotage the peace process.

For the Israelis, the danger is that Arafat's leadership could still prevail, extending PLO legitimacy beyond nonaligned, Third World and Eastern-bloc constituencies to secure an eventual role in an international forum on regional peace. The Palestinian factor in the Amman Accords also entails problems for Israel's strategy of separate peace with Jordan along the lines of its settlement with Egypt. Thus the Arafat loyalists are hemmed in at the front and the rear in their drive for the diplomatic option.

### Israeli maneuver?

From their position, the air strike looks undeniably like a maneuver to bring the initiative to a close. It produces the kind of international tension that inhibits any peace process. It gambles on Washington's ideological support to swamp the Palestinian question under rhetoric of sovereign retribution. Bolstered by direct backing from the White House, Israel's Peres government is not obliged to substantiate its claims that the PLO Force 17 was responsible for the killing of three Israelis in Larnaca, Cyprus, last month. Israel's assertion that its air strike was an act of revenge for

the killing is also seen as a sufficient justification for the attack. Apparently, any Palestinian action can be attributed without explanation to the PLO mainstream—which has denied involvement in the Larnaca affair, although claiming responsibility for more than one attack in recent months.

Arafat's narrow escape in Tunis raises the question of Israeli intentions even more sharply. The PLO chairman represents the only mainstream bargaining force in the organization at present. His demise would render the PLO unable, and probably unwilling, to continue down the obstacle course toward negotiations—which would be a dramatic political success for Israel.

The importance of the recognition issue is pin-pointed clearly by Reagan's hasty

recantation of the suggestion he made in Chicago on October 10 that the Palestinian hijackers of the *Achille Lauro* currently in Egypt could be handed over to the PLO for disciplinary action. This was probably the most frank act of recognition ever accorded the PLO by any U.S. president. But within hours steps had been taken at a rapidly convened press conference to smooth over the president's highly significant slip.

The Israeli attack also has repercussions for Tunisia, a small nation of some seven million inhabitants that has maintained cordial relations with Washington for many years, under the rule of aging President Habib Bourguiba, who was received by Reagan in June. The Tunisian death toll, thought to be between 12-20, poses difficulties for

*Continued on page 22*

## Casualty list still unreleased

The PLO has not released an official list of Palestinian deaths following the Israeli raid on Tunis. But the organization's office in London confirms that none of the Palestinians resident in Tunis who recently spoke to *In These Times* (see *In These Times*, Oct. 9)—they were largely from the news agency Wafa, the PLO political department and the Palestinian trade union confederation—were killed in the Israeli attack, which destroyed the main PLO building.

## Arafat helps end ship hijacking

The successful diplomatic resolution to the *Achille Lauro* hijacking—orchestrated by Italy, Egypt and the PLO—is being billed in Europe as a piece of elaborate stage management designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of Arafat's authority to reign in rebel Palestinian activities. As *In These Times* went to press, the Palestinian hijackers' affiliation remained unclear, but they are be-



Yasir Arafat—a moderate—narrowly escaped the Tunis raid.

lived by the PLO in London to be a Palestine Liberation Front splinter group. The PLO denies the hijacking was organized to boost Arafat's international status. The killing of one U.S. passenger aboard the *Achille Lauro* appears to confirm this position. The PLO in Tunis requested Egypt to release the hijackers to them.



# HI-TEC

This is the second of a three-part series on California's Silicon Valley.

By Joan Walsh

SAN JOSE, CA

**W**HEN A STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT study released this year found two to three times as many birth defects and miscarriages in the Silicon Valley neighborhood of Los Paseos as elsewhere in Santa Clara County, residents felt they were one step closer to confirming what many already believed: the high rate of problem pregnancies in their community was linked to a toxic chemical spill discovered in 1981 at nearby Fairchild Camera and Instrument Co. that contaminated the neighborhood's drinking water.

The state study made no direct link between the Fairchild spill and the high rates of heart abnormalities, birth defects and miscarriages in children conceived by Los Paseos women in 1981. No one knows exactly when the leak began, so establishing which problems can be linked to it is impossible for now. But some 400 Los Paseos residents have brought suit against the water district over the spill, charging that the high levels of the solvents trichlorethane and dichlorethane found in district wells caused their reproductive troubles.

All over Silicon Valley people are watching to see whether follow-up studies by the state can confirm the suspected link between the Fairchild spill and the neighborhood's tragedy, because Fairchild is not alone. Santa Clara County tops the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Superfund list, with 19 designated toxic cleanup sites. The Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition points to 140 cases of soil or groundwater chemical contamination, and says chemicals have been found in 66 Santa Clara County wells.

But the Fairchild study could foreshadow more dire health problems in a group that figures only tangentially in the community's toxic debates: workers in the microelectronics industry, particularly semiconductor manufacturing, who are exposed to toxic chemicals in much higher concentration than the mothers of Los Paseos. Says Dr. John Harris of the State Birth Defects Registry: "If [contaminated] drinking water is harmful, it's certain that occupational exposure is more harmful. All of us know there's a theoretic risk."

But it's a risk that industry publicly denies. In the last decades workers in this comparatively young field have begun to show signs of occupational illness, ranging from respiratory troubles and menstrual irregularities to chemical sensitivities that cause both physical and psychological complaints. Their stories are backed up by the

testimony of physicians and other health professionals who have treated microelectronics workers. But industry leaders continue to claim that their field is among the safest for its workers, and given that only they monitor in-plant health complaints (see accompanying story), there is little to contradict them. Not one study of the health of hi-tech electronics workers has been completed in the industry's 35-year history.

Nevertheless, a growing network of doctors, health researchers, state officials, attorneys and disabled workers themselves continue to challenge the industry's safe, clean reputation. Industry leaders dismiss them as agitators, union sympathizers, ambulance chasers, even "pirates," who are out to advance their cause or line their pockets at the industry's expense. "Change will only come through a body count," predicts attorney Amanda Hawes. But though it might help their cause, a body count is just what workers' health advocates are trying to prevent.

## Unlikely apostate

Dr. Joseph LaDou of the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at the University of California-San Francisco is probably the best-known crusader against the health hazards of the microelectronics industry. But his credentials make him an unlikely apostate. At the Peninsula Industrial Clinic in Sunnyvale, LaDou once had

a thriving practice treating workers referred to him by local semiconductor manufacturers and other electronics firms. But repeated experience with workers' health complaints, along with his growing knowledge of the potential health problems associated with chemicals widely used in semiconductor production, turned LaDou into a skeptic, then a critic, when it comes to the industry's health and safety claims.

"I grew concerned when we largely overcame the problems of acid burns," LaDou said, by providing workers with clothing to protect them from chemical splashing. "And then in the late '70s there was this continued problem with illness, most of it from workers complaining of [chemical] inhalations, that was unrelated to the acid problem."

Semiconductor fabrication uses the most lethal chemicals in all of industry to turn silicon wafers into chips. Highly toxic gases like arsine, phosphine and diborane clean the wafers and change their electrical properties—gases that in high exposures have been linked to respiratory problems, blood disorders and cancer. The organic solvents xylene, trichlorethane, toluene and benzene are used in etching, stripping and soldering the chips. The solvents can cause respiratory damage, and in one Scandinavian study were linked to birth defects and miscarriages. Workers also use large amounts of acids—hydrochloric, sulfuric and hydrofluoric—in the fabrication process. According to LaDou, the incidence of worker-reported illness has climbed parallel to the increase in the use of such chemicals, particularly gases.

Although the industry's overall illness reporting procedures make its illness totals suspect, health researchers can still look at cases of systemic poisoning, which indicate exposure to toxic chemicals. And the percentage of systemic poisoning reported by semiconductor workers is twice the manufacturing average. Semiconductor makers like to downplay those figures by pointing out that most of industry doesn't work with hazardous chemicals and makes for an unfair comparison. But LaDou points out that in the last two years systemic poisoning among semiconductor workers topped rates logged by petroleum and chemical makers, even makers of quite toxic agricultural chemicals.

LaDou has used every available forum to call for an independent government-sponsored health study of semiconductor workers, from industry-sponsored conferences to the pages of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's magazine, *Technology Review*, to the *New York Times*.

He believes his campaign has had the effect of increasing manufacturers' safety concerns—that some have been prodded into spending money on workplace protections.

"In an industry so concerned with safety, these companies have no physicians," he notes—only IBM and Fairchild employ doctors. "Here's an industry projected to be the savior of American manufacturing and there have been no health studies of its workers," he says. "A lot of people believe the only force that can regulate this industry is the plaintiff attorney. If people start to get maimed or die, the plaintiff attorneys are going to shut down this industry."

"That's a victory"

Mandy Hawes, plaintiff attorney, believes

## A 'clean' industry's dirty record keeping

The year 1980 was not a good one for the public image of California's semiconductor industry. That was the year three workers fired by the Signetics Corporation sued the company for \$25 million, claiming that their health had been damaged by exposure to toxins at the plant. They believed they were fired because they had reported toxic leaks to the federal government, complaints that triggered a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) investigation and a front-page series in the *San Jose Mercury News* on chemical hazards in the workplace.

At the same time, the United Electrical Workers union (UE) and the Santa Clara Center for Occupational Safety and Health (SCCOSH) began a campaign to publicize worker safety hazards throughout the semiconductor industry. Until then, California semiconductor manufacturers had maintained an image as a safe, clean industry.

But in 1980, the industry's illness rate alone was three times higher than the rest of manufacturing. Industry critics like UE and SCCOSH pointed out that the illness rate had tended for years to be notably higher than the manufacturing average.

The next year the Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) said that it had brought its illness rate down. But it did so without an industry-wide change in production or safety procedures. It hired an environmental and occupational health consultant, Donald Lassiter, PhD. And according to SIA President Tom Hinkelman, Lassiter found that many cases being reported on OSHA logs as illnesses could have instead been

classified as injuries—a distinction that meant many would not have to be recorded at all.

Between 1980-81 the illness rate in semiconductors dropped 69 percent, from 1.3 illness per 100 workers to .4. Industry critics have repeatedly charged that the new recording practices hide incidences of toxic exposures and obscure their long-term health effects. Some workplace mishaps, such as most chemical burns, make sense recorded as injuries. But Dr. Joseph LaDou of the division of Occupational and Environmental Safety at UC-San Francisco believes that many cases being reclassified are genuinely illnesses and should be reported as such.

"Instantaneous" toxic exposures, according to federal guidelines, are rightly recorded as injuries. But LaDou says that semiconductor companies use the term instantaneous so broadly as to include exposures of almost any length of time, up to three hours in at least one case, so that the cases can be classified as injuries. And only serious injuries—those that require medical treatment or time off from work—must be reported to OSHA. This case-shuffling, LaDou believes, serves to improve the semiconductor makers' safety image and makes it impossible to track the incidence of toxic exposure and related illness.

SIA consultant Lassiter says he has merely brought industry recording practices in line with OSHA regulations. He denies Hinkelman's assertion that he advised the industry it was overrecording illnesses, and doesn't believe the new recording system has reduced overall illness/injury rates. "I have no idea why

that rate dropped," Lassiter said. "But it's my opinion that [federal and state] surveys have been responsible for alerting employers to be more attentive to the [OSHA] form."

The state Department of Industrial Relations looked into the illness-reporting controversy in May 1983, examining the OSHA records of six local chip makers. The Department concluded that, while no law had intentionally been broken, the companies were recording many incidents as injuries that should have been logged as illnesses.

But only a summary of the report was made public; the unreleased full report went much further in its criticism of the industry. A copy was obtained this year by San Francisco's KRON-TV, in a news investigation of health hazards in the semiconductor industry. It revealed that state officials found evidence that several companies purposely underreported illness statistics and that one firm had apparently altered company records in anticipation of the state investigators.

The state did attempt to tighten OSHA instructions to make underreporting illnesses more difficult, an effort the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics briefly supported. But the effort was blocked by the federal Office of Management and Budget, which was trying to ease regulations, not tighten them. SCCOSH project organizer Shirley Conrad believes the current political climate will thwart future efforts to tighten recording practices: "These reporting guidelines are being weakened to create good-looking safety trends, which the Reagan administration will use to defend the deregulation of industry." —Bill Kransdorf



# HEALTH HAZARDS

she's far from shutting down the industry. Most workers' compensation claims she handles are rejected; even some of her victories, while welcome, hardly seem to merit the term. Take the case of Fred, a maintenance worker at Plessy Microscience, a now-defunct semiconductor maker.

Fred often worked around organic solvents. Sometimes it was his task to skim xylene out of wastewater at the plant. He began to suffer recurring headaches and get ill when exposed to things like auto exhaust. He quit his job, but his chemical sensitivities made finding other employment difficult. The Workers' Compensation Appeals Board eventually found Fred had a work-related permanent disability, and his employer was ordered to pay his

Compensation Appeals Board found the argument convincing.

Hawes' Supreme Court appeal challenges the board's assessment of Signetics' evidence. But it also asks the court to establish guidelines for awarding claims in cases where the exact cause of the disability is always going to be a matter of dispute. At this point, the only way a chemical exposure victim can prove his or her health problems are related to the incident "is either to have a video camera running and show an instant replay of the accident, or recreate the accident," Hawes says.

## Semiconductor Silkwoods?

But the cases that have won Hawes most notoriety are against Advanced Micro Devices, the nation's eighth largest chip maker. Hawes represents eight former AMD production workers who say repeated chemical exposures in the course of wafer fabrication made them sick. Their complaints range from asthma to depression to immune system disorders, and if any of them win their suits the decision will have repercussions beyond the microelectronics industry.

The women's complaints have been widely publicized around the Bay Area. The *San Jose Mercury News* Sunday magazine, *West*, exposed the women's cases in a lengthy article detailing both the health complaints and workplace accidents central to the legal claims. And last May San Francisco's KRON-TV focused on the women's stories in a special news feature on health hazards in the semiconductor industry. AMD denounced the *West* article as inaccurate, threatened KRON-TV with a libel suit and called its former workers-turned-plaintiffs "18th-century pirates," holding up the company for undeserved workers compensation payments.

Plaintiff Anita Zimmerman laughs at the label: "Pirates—We're gonna turn out to be the Silkwoods of Silicon Valley." She says repeated exposures to a substance she believes was hydrochloric acid damaged her respiratory system and brought on a recurrence of bronchial asthma. Although asthmatic as a child, Zimmerman outgrew the disease in her teens, becoming an amateur gymnast. Her chemical exposures at AMD forced her to quit her job, and put her in the hospital for five days. AMD refused her workers' comp claims, at least partly because she wasn't hospitalized until after she quit.

But Zimmerman's complaints are relatively straightforward. The other women's maladies involve chemical sensitivities that are even less widely acknowledged than respiratory troubles—chemical allergies, neurological problems and immune system disorders. Plaintiff Nancy Hawkes is a chemical prisoner. She can't visit a grocery store or do the laundry. Her allergies range from auto exhaust to household cleaners to wool. When her illness was at its worst—part of the time she worked at AMD—she suffered memory loss, headaches and violent mood swings. One diagnosis describes her condition as "chemically induced T-cell inadequacy," a form of "immune dysregulation," according to Dr. Alan Levin, a San Francisco immunologist.

Hawkes' AMD co-worker Paula Baca also suffered headaches and mood swings. She blames her troubles on her sensitivity to the solvent xylene, which frequently leaked from a developing machine in her fabrication area. Debra Dodd believes xylene caused her breast milk to become orange, and brought on personality changes like Hawkes and Baca describe.

All the women tell a similar story—that AMD minimized the hazards of the chem-

icals they worked with and downplayed their complaints about the problems connected with workplace leaks and spills. The company now denies that their illnesses can be connected to those complaints.

But Hawkes has assembled a battery of medical experts that could make the AMD cases a national testing ground for theories of chemically-induced allergies and immune disorders. Says Berkeley allergist Dr. Phyllis Saifer, "It's a new concept, but I think chemical sensitivity will be to this century what bacteria once was"—a seemingly far-fetched theory of disease that became a mainstay of diagnosis and treatment.

A growing number of doctors across medical disciplines have come to accept theories of chemical sensitivity. Psychiatrists discover that chemical exposures worsen their patients' anxiety or depression. Allergists notice that their patients show symptoms of endocrine disorders such as thyroiditis. Saifer made Levin a convert by showing him that some of her chemically allergic patients suffered T-cell loss. "At that point I thought chemical allergies were psychosomatic and she was a quack," Levin recalls.

That judgment still holds in much of the medical community. In an industry where women make up a majority of production workers, company defenders get a lot of mileage out of the word hysterical. But as Nancy Hawkes told the *Mercury News*, "My symptoms showed early. A lot of women have been there 10 years. I feel they'll be meeting each other 10 years from now when they go for radiation or chemotherapy."

## No Bhopal

Workers' health advocates in Silicon Valley have had some successes. They've gotten remarkably sympathetic media coverage. AMD Chair W.J. Saunders, in a San Francisco Commonwealth Club speech two weeks ago, blamed "misguided journalists" for the industry's tarnished safety reputation. And the health crusaders have even at times gotten the attention of concerned state officials.

But in the current political climate, efforts to study the industry, let alone regulate it, seem destined to get no where. "There hasn't been a Bhopal," says LaDou. It's been a years-long political battle just to get a cancer registry in California. The Birth Defects Registry John Harris heads covers five Bay Area counties, including Santa Clara, and could turn out to be one source of data about reproductive hazards to microelectronics workers. But the registry, established in January 1983, "will take quite a while to build up the significant numbers we need," Harris notes.

Meanwhile, as the state follows up its study of birth defects and miscarriages connected with the Fairchild spill, some researchers are pessimistic that a conclusive link can ever be proven. "The best thing they could do to clarify it would be to look at a group of people with a much greater exposure," says Dr. Linda Rudolph of the State Hazard Evaluation System and Information Service. "If [semiconductor] workers don't have higher rates of birth defects and miscarriages, 'it's not the drinking water.' But if they do? Right now government agencies don't seem inclined to find out."

Research assistance by Bill Kransdorf.  
In two weeks: Why there are no unions in Silicon Valley electronics.

## DOWN IN THE VALLEY

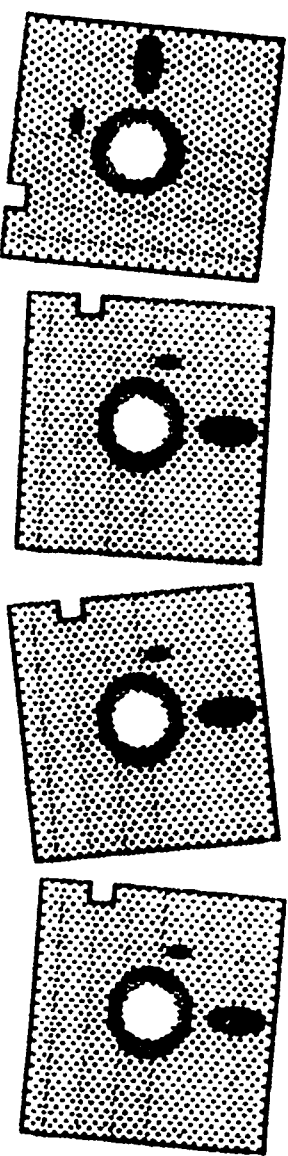
lifetime medical expenses, as well as provide retraining. He went to school in motel management, but couldn't find work, since most motels want husband-and-wife teams, and his wife already has a job. Now he works as a security guard, making minimum wage.

"Yet that's a victory," Hawes says. Contested workers' comp claims—and chemical disability claims are always contested—take anywhere from four to 10 years, and if successful win workers between \$10,000 and \$20,000.

Some workers don't live to see the process through. Noemi Sanchez, who worked at National Semiconductor, developed scleroderma, a disease that causes fibroids in the body's connective tissues and can ultimately shut major organs down. She made a workers' comp claim, but she died in 1983, at age 35. Her family blames her disease on exposure to low-pressure chemical vapors when she worked at National, from 1977-81, and brought a wrongful death suit against the company.

In trying to link workers' disabilities to chemical exposure, Hawes is fighting both powerful economic interests—her suits have ramifications far beyond the semiconductor industry—and scientific uncertainty about those links. Companies can and do hire doctors who assert a worker's illness more likely has a bacteriological or viral explanation than a chemical one.

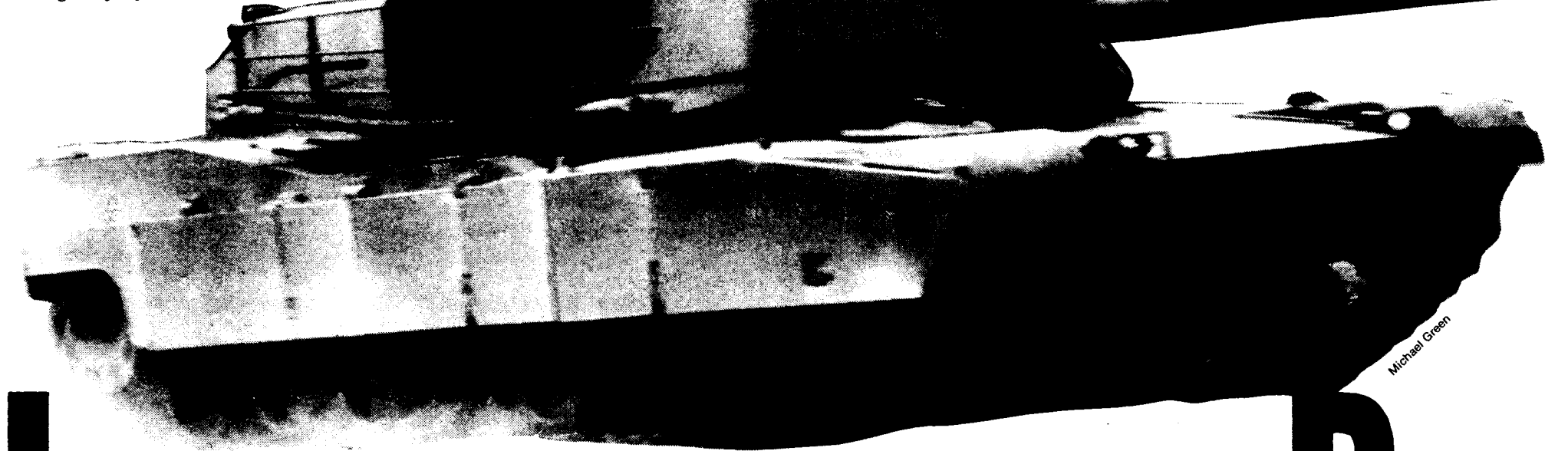
Hawes has taken one case to the state Supreme Court in order to clarify guidelines for awarding compensation in disability claims. Signetics production worker Susan Discolo says she suffered skin and respiratory damage in a sulfuric acid explosion at her workstation in July 1980. Although the company paid her medical bills for nine months after the accident, it denied her claim of permanent disability and refused to provide her with retraining and lifetime medical care. Doctors hired by Signetics said her complaint was more likely viral than chemical in origin, and the Workers'





# The Project on Military Procurement is on a "non-political" crusade to trim military fat — and

The new M-1 looks impressive, but breaks down a lot and guzzles gas, and manufacturer General Dynamics has been investigated for fraud.



# LEANING ON THE PEA

By Bill Hall

**"T**HE PENTAGON IS LIKE A CAR out of control," explains Dina Rasor of the Washington, D.C.-based Project on Military Procurement. "Although some may want to steer it to the left or the right, the main thing is to slow it down."

Under Rasor's committed leadership, the Project has been on a four-year crusade against the Pentagon that has uncovered waste, cost overruns and bogus weapons systems. Her work has sparked scandals at the Department of Defense (DoD) and among defense contractors, and she has mobilized efforts to move DoD toward extensive weapons purchasing reform.

The Project's most resounding success was the termination of the DIVAD, or "Sergeant York," anti-aircraft gun. DIVAD was a \$1.8-billion boondoggle from Ford Aerospace that Rasor and her co-workers condemned for months as entirely ineffective against Soviet helicopters—worse even than the gun's supposedly "obsolete" predecessors. The Project also helped reveal failures in the Navy's "Aegis" shipborne radar system that contributed to the Navy's recent decision to purchase fewer weapons than planned.

But it was the Project's exposure of military contractor spare-parts overpricing that captured the public's imagination. It uncovered such Pentagon purchasing abuses as \$600 toilet seats, \$74,000 airplane staircases, \$9,609 Air Force wrenches and \$7,622 coffeemakers—which, to be fair, do make 10 cups.

Rasor, a 29-year-old graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, became interested in raking Pentagon muck when working as an investigative journalist. She says she quit her job as an ABC News editorial assistant because the network left more serious investigative work to seasoned journalists. The National Taxpayers' Union, an advocacy group, then hired her. During her tenure there she exposed a \$2 billion cost overrun scheme by Lockheed and the Pentagon.

It was this disclosure that gained Rasor the attention of the infamous A. Ernest Fitzgerald. In 1969 President Richard Nixon had fired Fitzgerald from his Pentagon job after he leaked to the press evidence of enormous cost overruns in Lockheed's C-5 transport plane. Whistleblowers—

whom Fitzgerald calls "closet patriots"—have been "going public" since Fitzgerald won a lawsuit, and in 1982 returned to the Pentagon.

Since then scores of anonymous informants within the Pentagon have smuggled internal documents out to Rasor at the risk of DoD persecution. Rasor and her team analyze and digest the information—all of it unclassified—and then channel it to journalists.

Based on her Project experiences exposing waste, fraud and inefficiency, Rasor has developed her own theories about Pentagon machinations. Rasor told *In These Times*, "Money fuels policy in the Pentagon. It has corrupted the whole procurement process and turned the incentive system upside down. For Pentagon bureaucrats, spending money and winning political victories gets them promoted."

Pouring more money into the Pentagon, Rasor believes, only hardens the "iron triangle"—the Pentagon, Congress and the weapons industry—that comprise the military-industrial complex. The top 20 Pentagon contractors returned congressional favors to the tune of \$3.6 million in 1984 campaign contributions, double the 1980 level.

Rasor describes the Pentagon as "one of the largest socialist institutions in the world" because military contracts are awarded with little or no competition among weapons manufacturers. Last year less than 5 percent of Pentagon contracts involved competitive bidding.

Following the highly publicized "spare parts follies," which culminated with the Project's revelation that the Pentagon pays about 30 percent more for each item than it should, congressional bi-partisan support has emerged to demand Pentagon reform. The Congressional Military Reform Caucus, chaired by a Democrat and a Republican, currently has 133 House and Senate members, divided evenly between the two parties.

In 1983 the Caucus pushed through a bill creating an independent testing office so that officers who have staked their careers on a weapon system, and the contractors who sell the weapon, are no longer the same people testing it. Several reform bills in the works include one to create a civilian-controlled Defense Procurement Agency, sponsored by Sen. Roth (R-DE). The Caucus is also trying to increase competition among private weapons contractors for

a weapons contract.

The bi-partisan congressional reform movement has forced DoD officials—including Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger—to take notice. But Rasor emphasizes that Weinberger's highly publicized 10-point program promising to reduce waste and fraud, unveiled in July 1983, has had negligible effect. Promises made to Congress have not been kept, and new policies have not been implemented, according to Rasor.

"As long as more and more money keeps flowing in, there will be more and more bureaucracy and less and less effect of reform...and most of the Congress members who do commit to reform don't follow through," said Rasor. An ongoing campaign is needed, she believes, to restructure the deeply entrenched Pentagon bureaucracy.

## Neither left nor right

Although admitting that the Project could probably raise more money if it took sides, Rasor refuses to let politics into her work. "I don't get into war, peace or morality.... I don't care about politics, I just want to solve the problem." That approach is in part responsible for the Project's high credibility in Washington and gives it access to whistleblowers who might not want to work with partisan organizations.

Rasor's firm commitment to straddling the ideological fence between left and right got her fired when the Project was working under the auspices of the National Taxpayers' Legal Fund (NTLF). The NTLF board instructed her to come out against a U.S. foreign policy of intervention and to criticize military spending in principle. Rasor refused, however, citing a promise she had made to her whistleblowers. Of the decision to end Project funding, NTLF board chair Edward Crane wrote: "The Project on Military Procurement is attempting to increase the efficiency of our fighting machine. From my perspective, it is already too grossly efficient."

Although the Project advocates reducing the Pentagon's money "fuel line," lowering the defense budget is not a top priority. Rasor told *In These Times*, "We never criticize a weapons system without offering an alternative to it.... We also don't talk about where the money that is saved by reducing waste and inefficiency should go."

Tim McCune, one of the Project's six

staff members, described the Project as "first of all concerned with the safety of U.S. soldiers using this equipment.... But it's also patriotism. Obviously there's a threat out there.... If you're spending too much money on spare parts, then you can't meet commitments worldwide. Everyone, regardless of their ideology, would agree that if our soldiers are there fighting, we should at least give them a chance to win."

"We're looking for some way to meet defense needs—not give the illusion that they're being met, as systems like DIVAD would," he added. "We're trying to make the military more capable of completing missions in the future."

## An officer and a businessman

Former Army Major Richard A. Gabriel shares the Project's Pentagon criticisms. In his new book, titled *Military Incompetence: Why the American*



## Military Doesn't Win,

he examines the five operations the U.S. military has undertaken since 1970, noting that each one has failed. His extensive plan to prevent such failures in the future includes bringing back the draft—which Gabriel claims works very well in the Soviet Union—and drastically reforming the composition of the military's officer corps.

"When officers start thinking like businessmen, they lose their ethics," Gabriel said. "But procurement fraud is a particularly heinous moral crime. The cost is in lives of soldiers."

"The fact that a weapon doesn't work is of no interest to the [Pentagon] bureaucracy," he added. "The officers who criticized the DIVAD [anti-aircraft] gun will be punished, and those who defended it will be promoted.... These guys give to their careers what they owe to the Republic and the Constitution."

Rep. Denny Smith (R-OR) also agrees with the Project. An aide said that Smith—who consistently backs Reagan's anti-Communist foreign policy—has worked with the Project many times, and he said his Project contacts are "ultra-hawks." Currently, Smith is challenging the \$80 billion Aegis shipborne radar system with the Project's assistance.

"We're not trying to cut corners. It's a question of effectiveness," the aide said.



strengthen military muscle.

armament in Vietnam. But the new rifle tended to jam up and become inoperative. Eventually the problem was corrected, but not until it was discovered by men using the weapon in the field. Rasor told *In These Times* that a high-ranking intelligence officer revealed to her that the rifle's malfunction contributed to between 10-15,000 U.S. soldiers' deaths.

"In a war situation we draft soldiers," Rasor said. "It's criminal, then, if a soldier loses his life because the weapon he's been given gets him killed. Somebody in the system let the M-16 incident happen. And who went to jail? ...I'd say the M-16 is very instructive to my work."

Smith's aide, drawing a parallel to the cancelled DIVAD gun, said, "We spent \$2 billion on DIVAD—on a weapon that's not worth a damn. That's treason, but it's the system that's treasonous, not the man who criticizes it.... If Americans are patriotic and want a strong defense, we have to fix this inefficiency problem that is rampant throughout the system."

Although Pentagon reform has united left and right in Congress, each side's ultimate goals differ. Liberals like Rep. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) hope their work with the Project for reform will create an "opening" that, by avoiding controversial foreign policy debate, will lead to a consensus for reducing the military budget—and freeing funds for other programs.

In contrast, conservatives like Rep. Smith who stress the need for a strong military are not interested in pinching pennies. In Pentagon incompetence conservatives have found an explanation for the series of U.S. military defeats that have characterized recent history, from Vietnam to the botched but ultimately triumphant invasion of Grenada. Conveniently, concentrating on faulty hardware and inept bureaucracy leaves unchallenged the foreign policies that lead to military action. For many on the right, the lesson of Vietnam is not that the U.S. should avoid fighting distant wars, but that it should fight only when it knows it can win.

Although both left and right see recent military reform victories as advancing their goals, current administration policy weighs heavily on the side of right-wing objectives. The liberal goal of stronger domestic programs is likely to be eclipsed by the conservative goals of overcoming past failures and making the military readier for action. ■

## Hi-tech hardware

The Project on Military Procurement recently revealed that several new weapons purchased by the Pentagon aren't the hi-tech miracles that their contractors claim. The weapons include:

• **M-1 main battle tank.** Previously developed by Chrysler, the tank, now in full production at General Dynamics, will replace the M-60 as a front-line battle tank. But the M-1 only gets eight miles-per-gallon, frequently breaks down and is encumbered by its many refueling stops. Price: \$20.1 billion for 7,480 tanks.

• **Maverick IIR air-to-ground missile.** The Air Force temporarily stopped delivery of this heat-seeking missile from Hughes Aircraft because of a lack of quality control. In one Maverick model the aircraft's pilot guides the weapon by watching a monitor of the TV camera mounted in the missile's nose. But it remains unclear how the pilot is to fly his airplane and the missile at the same time. Price: \$6 billion for 60,697 missiles, a more than 25 percent increase over last year's estimate.

• **Copperhead guided artillery shell.** Actually a miniature aircraft, this field gun bullet homes in on a laser beam fired by a soldier, who must remain in the open and stationary for at least 18

seconds while he guides the shell. Because the laser beam can be spotted, the soldier is vulnerable to enemy fire. The system also fails in foggy, rainy or smoky conditions that dissipate the targeting beam—conditions not unusual on a battlefield, especially in Western Europe. Price: \$1.4 billion for 31,252 shells.

• **Aegis cruiser and destroyer.** These boats carry a radar system that supposedly makes U.S. ships invulnerable to a surprise air attack. But the radar cannot locate low-flying cruise missiles or aircraft, and the system has never been tested in battlefield conditions. Price: more than \$50 billion for 67 ships.

• **M-2 Bradley armored personnel carrier.** Designed to replace the Vietnam-era M-113, this vehicle's aluminum armor gives off a poisonous gas when hit—a novel form of "protection" for the vehicle's passengers. The aluminum armor also reportedly catches fire easily, as the British crew of the sunken Sheffield—a ship with aluminum superstructure—discovered in the Falklands war. The M-2 has not been adequately tested in battlefield conditions, although FMC Corp., the vehicle's manufacturer, claims otherwise. Price: \$11.3 billion for 6,903 vehicles.

# PENTAGON

"...Aegis is supposed to be like a sea-based Star Wars, and Smith, having been a fighter pilot in Vietnam, was concerned that the system didn't have the capability that the Pentagon claimed."

Although Smith was instrumental in helping the Project finally get the DIVAD anti-aircraft gun cancelled, the aide said, "We need these types of weapons, but we need ones that will work.... Smith will probably be in front in proposing a new system in the future."

### No more Vietnams

Both Smith and the Project want to guarantee that the Vietnam war's M-16 assault rifle experience is not repeated. Smith's aide cited the weapon as one cause of that U.S. defeat. The original version of the weapon was altered by a Pentagon initiative before being issued as the basic U.S. troop



Dina Rasor and the Project on Military Procurement are tackling Pentagon corruption.



### Going after the meat

Richard Healey, director of the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy—a coalition of groups working against U.S. intervention and military buildup—praises the Project on Military Procurement's efforts of uncovering fraud.

"It is tempting to go forward arm-in-arm with Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA) on the issue of Pentagon fraud," Healey said. "But what we're really concerned about is not having a clean, lean military machine that supports current policy, but having a new policy. The Project and the congressional reform effort are looking at the margins of the defense budget—not the meat. The Coalition, however, is focusing not on the \$40 billion that might be thrown away, but the long-term \$270 billion."

The M-16 rifle jammed up in Vietnam and, some say, helped defeat the U.S.



## EDITORIAL

## Some principles are made only for friends

On October 1 Israeli planes bombed PLO headquarters in Tunis—some 1,500 miles from Israel—ostensibly in retaliation for the killing of three Israelis in Larnica, Cyprus, six days earlier (see page 9). The PLO had denied that they or any group affiliated with them were responsible, and yet the White House responded to the bombing by condoning it as a legitimate response to terrorism.

"As a matter of U.S. policy," said Reagan spokesman Larry Speakes, "retaliation against terrorist attacks is a legitimate response and an expression of self defense." And, he added, "From preliminary reports available to us, this appears to be what was involved in this case." The next day, realizing that this violation of Tunisian sovereignty could not be taken so lightly, the administration backed off

a bit, but stood by the statement on policy.

Like most of the principles this administration claims to uphold, this policy is really no policy at all. The statement is simply another example of the administration's deep cynicism and hypocrisy. For if this were, in fact, administration policy, then the administration would also look with favor on a Nicaraguan attack on *contra* bases in Honduras and Costa Rica—or even on their training grounds in Panama.

The truth is that any time an ally or client of the Reagan administration acts against a perceived threat some rationale is concocted in its defense, while any time a nation or group held in administration disfavor acts in its defense it is branded as terrorist. This is so obvious it surely must be clear even to those who control the American media. Too bad they don't feel free to say so. ■

## Seeking polarization is a desperate necessity

This week (see pages 16-17) we are publishing a discussion of the New Cold War that explores both the nature of the conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States and how the rulers of the two powers use the Cold War ideology in the pursuit of their domestic and foreign policy goals.

Both rely on the idea that the other is a threat to its security and well-being as a basis for gaining popular support for—or acquiescence to—massive arms expenditures and the deployment of military forces outside their borders. But whether or not this ideology is true is a question not asked in polite society—not even in the United States with its open and democratic political system.

As regular readers of these pages know, we consider this question to lie at the center of the politics of disarmament, intervention in Central America and elsewhere, and even the budget deficit. We see this as the key political question of the day. And our view on it is that the

Soviet Union is not a threat to the security and well-being of the American people, or to the people of Europe or the Third World.

But no ideology can survive, much less flourish, unless it has some basis in reality. So we are inviting discussion on the New Cold War: how is the idea of the Soviet threat true and how is it untrue? Who is threatened by it and who is not? In future issues we will examine the relative military, economic and political power of the Soviet Union and the United States.

The Reagan administration has had five years to publicize its version of the Soviet threat. This view has recently been most clearly stated by retired Major General John K. Singlaub, the Reagan administration's unofficial agent in mobilizing private and foreign government support for its attempt to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. Singlaub, who says he has been raising \$500,000 a month for the Nicaraguan *contras*, heads the World

Anti-Communist League and its American affiliate, the U.S. Council for World Freedom. He recently told *Common Cause* magazine that there was a "hard-core" of left-wing Congress members who "have always supported Communist organizations around the world." By this, he explained, he meant those who "tend to believe that socialism is the wave of the future," and that "the best foreign policy of the United States is to cooperate with these socialist moods."

The accuracy of Singlaub's estimate of Congress aside, this was a succinct expression of the administration's point of view by their hand-picked private agent. And we think he came close to being correct. There are socialist moods throughout the world, and especially throughout the Third World, and they do represent the future to the degree that they constitute the growing opposition to the semi-colonial status quo. (That's why the two countries most closely associated with the World Anti-Communist League are Taiwan and South Korea, two outposts of neo-colonialism.)

But the Reagan administration also believes—or claims to believe—that this growing socialist-minded opposition is a creature of the Soviet Union, and that the world can be neatly divided into two camps. As Noam Chomsky points out (see page 16), it is administration policy to do everything it can to make this belief correspond with reality. And as we have frequently pointed out, precious few people in American public life seem willing to challenge this view head-on.

There was a time—roughly from the founding of the Communist International in 1919 to the '50s—when the Soviet Union did seek to guide revolutionary movements throughout the world, and when such major movements as those in China and Vietnam were led by Communists affiliated with the Comintern. But that's history.

Starting with the Cuban revolution in 1958, which was opposed by the Cuban Communist Party until shortly before it succeeded, no Latin American or African revolution has been guided or inspired by the Soviet Union. Once in power many of these new governments have turned to the Soviets out of necessity, sometimes encouraged by ideological affinity. But while Soviet aid has enabled many revolutions to survive, Soviet society has not been seen as a model by any of them, not even by Cuba, which has been the most

important Soviet ally of the lot.

Because all the revolutions of the past 25 years have occurred in underdeveloped nations, they share some political characteristics of Soviet society, but they also have in common a strong tendency to assert their independence of the Soviet Union and to distance themselves from Soviet society, which is universally seen as stifling and increasingly stagnant.

Socialism may or may not be the wave of the future. In our opinion, that will depend on what socialism comes to stand for among the peoples of the World. If it is a society like the Soviet Union, it will have an appeal only to those desperately seeking escape from American corporate domination, and then only until independence has been achieved. But revolutions

*Socialism may or may not be the wave of the future. That will depend on what socialism comes to stand for among the peoples of the world. If it is a society like the Soviet Union, it will have appeal only as a last resort.*

led by socialist-minded people in the Third World clearly are the wave of the present—and of the future as far as we can see it. That is not a serious question. The real question is whether or not the American people will continue to support their government in its constant attempts to prevent these people from achieving independence and from defining for themselves what kinds of societies they want.

The Reagan administration knows this, which is why they are desperately—and so far successfully by default—seeking to identify popular revolutionary movements throughout the world as Soviet-led. ■

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### STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

- 1a. Title of Publication: In These Times  
1b. Publication No.: 01-605-992  
2. Date of filing: Sept. 25, 1985  
3. Frequency of Issues: Weekly, except the first week of January, third week of March and last week of November and December; bi-weekly through first week in September.  
A. No. of Issues published annually: 41  
B. Annual subscription price: \$29.50  
4. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago (Cook Co.), IL 60657  
5. Complete mailing address of the general business office of the publishers: 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago (Cook Co.), IL 60657  
6. Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editor and managing editor: Publisher/Editor—James Weinstein, 2650 N. Lakeview, Chicago 60614. Managing Editor—Sheryl Larson, 2816 W. Eastwood, Chicago 60625  
7. Owner: Institute for Public Affairs (non-profit organization), 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, 60657.  
8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None  
9. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exemption status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months.

10. Extent and nature of circulation:		
	Average no. copies each issue	No. copies issue before filing date
A. Total no. copies (net press run)	25,400	26,400
B. Paid circulation:		
1. Sales through dealers & carriers, street vendors and counter sales	1,800	1,600
2. Mail subscriptions	22,475	23,669
C. Total paid circulation	24,275	25,269
D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means: samples, complimentary & other free copies	300	300
E. Total distribution	24,575	25,569
F. Copies not distributed		
1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	449	531
2. Returns from news agents	376	300
G. Total	25,400	26,400
11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.		

(signed) James Weinstein  
Publisher/Editor



# LETTERS

## AIDS research

**M**ARTIN GELNICK'S CALL FOR "FEDERAL research dollars in massive amounts" to deal with the AIDS challenge (Letters, Sept. 18) calls for an ironic footnote. Some years ago the federal government threatened criminal prosecution to suppress a research program that might by now have been on the way to finding an effective treatment for AIDS. This was research into the uses of milk in which antibodies had been produced to combat afflictions like asthma, hay fever and arthritis.

If any research in immune milk is going on now it is sub rosa. If any practitioners who have studied the possibilities of immune milk have found promise in its uses in dealing with AIDS, they are keeping it secret. They certainly don't want the government to put them in jail.

Three Canadian researchers, beyond the reach of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (Charles A. Mitchell, R. V. L. Walker and G. L. Bannister) have found that it is possible to produce viral antibodies in milk. This was before the AIDS epidemic, but if it is possible to deal with the influenza virus in this way, is it not reasonable to hope that the AIDS virus might also be so dealt with? Don't ask the FDA.

Fredrick S. Gram  
St. Paul, Minn.

## Anti-drivel

**W**ITH RESPECT TO "ANTI-SOVIET DRIV-el" by E. Mendez (Letters, Oct. 2), since when does criticizing the Soviet Union make one anti-left? Or is it a taboo among leftists to criticize the "socialist motherland"? This sounds pretty Stalinist to me (or a mirror image of Reaganism and McCarthyism). Further, for Mendez to cancel his subscription to a newspaper like *In These Times* on account of this petty incident, especially in these times of right-wing offensive, is totally immature, dogmatic and plain stupid. When is the U.S. left going to be completely cured of lingering Stalinism? Haven't they learned anything from the Italian Communist Party (Berlinguer *et al*), the R. Garaudy, the E. Maydels, the C. Bettelheims, the A. Gorzes, and so many more?

Noam Chomsky is one of the best thinkers of the U.S. left, although I do not agree 100 percent with what he writes. What is wrong with criticizing the Soviet Union for its invasion of Afghanistan? Does that make Chomsky's credentials less progressive, or should we send him to a psychopriest? The fact that the Afghani rebels may be chauvinistic, macho pigs (who perhaps beat up their wives!) is irrelevant (Letters, Oct. 2). A. Khomeini and his flock are similar right-wing reactionaries, but that does not give the U.S. the right to invade Iran. Both U.S. and USSR have too much dirty laundry to clean before they go around the world giving lessons of "democracy" or "socialism" to other countries.

Finally, the totally reactionary letter (Oct. 2) "The socialist as executioner" by D.J. Drudi should not have gone without a response. Somebody from your staff—or Evans Hopkins—should have answered this semi-fascist ideologue.

Keep up the good work! This is no time for fratricidal fights among the left.

Dr. John G. Papastaveldi  
Atlanta

## "Other women" behind the news?

**D**AVID GROTE DOES A GOOD JOB OF DESCRIBING female newscasters (ITT, Aug. 21). In fact, I was finding the article

**In These Times** is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

mildly interesting until the last two paragraphs.

Grote makes a serious error in his claim that it is "other women" who are to blame for the "happytalk" news team format. That it is "other women" who "forced the stations to tinker with the news format...."

Even if Grote had bothered to substantiate this claim with statistics from some poll or survey, how could he infer that women wanting to see women in prominent positions in news teams would want to see a particular type of female newscaster?

Has he done a survey of women asking such specific questions as: do you like your female newscasters beautiful-cute or beautiful-sexy or just plain beautiful? Must your female newscaster defer to her male colleague or do you like to see a little challenging behavior?

The people who make the decisions about news programming—or any programming, for that matter—are largely white, middle-class, middle-aged males. It's the producers, directors and TV corporation heads who demand this parody of an independent woman.

Mary Frances Brown  
Hot Springs, N.C.

## The French only think they did it

**W**HEN THE RAINBOW WARRIOR WAS FIRST bombed, there were three theories as to who did it and why. What was represented to me by a Greenpeace board member as the wildest was that it was a mission undertaken by some far-right extremist organization operating out of New Caledonia. Next came the notion that it was the CIA, but with no specific reasoning behind it. Finally, and what seems to me the real case (I use the word "seems" here purposely), is that the French intelligence services did the bombing to protect their nuclear testing program in the Pacific.

All three of these theories, and even the "admission" by the French that they were responsible, smack of the naivete surrounding Allende's overthrow in Chile. Remember, the American left was saying, "If only the CIA hadn't done (fill in the blank), Allende would still be around and the world would have a model of electoral socialism." The point being, of course, the CIA will do those terrible things and we should be planning on it.

In examining the three above explanations of the *Rainbow Warrior* bombing, we see the same problems. First, who would finance and instigate far-right extremist groups to perform such an act? My answer, given historical examples, would clearly be the CIA. In analyzing the case against the French intelligence

services, two points become immediately evident. Can we really expect the intelligence services of any Western nation to be independent of the CIA? Second, can it really be expected that a Western socialist government can gain control of its own intelligence services? History's and my answer would both be no. Not even a rabid anti-Communist like John F. Kennedy had control of the U.S. intelligence forces.

Finally, let's look at the theory that the CIA conducted the operation. If we discount the two above examples, one has to ask why Greenpeace? I believe that this is exactly the crux of the situation. It was not Greenpeace at all that anyone was after. Greenpeace and the *Rainbow Warrior* just happened to be a convenient pawn in the whole affair. The real target was the Nuclear Free Pacific Movement, and especially the leadership role being played by the Labor Government in New Zealand. The U.S. has been quite piqued by New Zealand's refusal to allow U.S. nuclear-powered and nuclear-arms-carrying vessels into their ports. The U.S. government is terrified that such policy might extend to other bases of operation in an area of the globe where our navy runs pretty much unchallenged.

The whole thing is reminiscent of one of Alexander Haig's preemptory warning shots over Europe. In effect, what was done was to say, if you continue to act in this childish manner, and not toe the line, here is an example of what is to come. The *Rainbow Warrior* just happened to be in the way. Unfortunate for them, but look at the cover it provided those who actually carried out the operation. Military intelligence is not always a contradiction in terms.

I am sure in the capitals of the world the real issue being discussed on this matter was not the *Rainbow Warrior*, nor the fate of the murdered Greenpeace member, Fernando Pereira. Rather it was the actual demonstration of the Reagan administration's policy of getting tough.

Gary Edelman  
Ettrick, Wisc.

## Fellowship in action

**Y**OUR EDITORIAL (ITT, SEPT. 4) CHARGES the disarmament movement with being paralyzed and credits Daniel Ellsberg and a few unnamed others as being willing to speak out in support of the Soviet moratorium and against Cold War myths.

Agreed that all too many in the peace movement refrain from doing this. But, in fairness, you should acknowledge those segments of the disarmament movement

that are doing what you call for.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation, especially during the last three years, has stressed repeatedly in its work and statements the need to link disarmament efforts with a proper understanding of the Soviet Union as distinct from the Cold War mythology now surrounding it.

Our statement and suggestions relating to the Soviet nuclear moratorium, the coming Summit and the coming Year of Peace—as the UN has named 1986—is being mailed to FOR's nearly 100 local chapters and thousands of other individuals and groups working on the issue of U.S.-USSR understanding as key to disarmament. We have also sent this statement, with an accompanying personal letter—in Russian—to Soviet groups and individuals we have sought to work with. We are inviting them to respond in their own way to this proposal and to make any suggestions to us that we might share with the American public.

Richard Baggett Deats  
Director, U.S.-USSR Reconciliation Program  
Fellowship of Reconciliation

## Superfluous?

**N**ORMAN SOLOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE PIECE on Soviet peace groups (ITT, Sept. 25) was interesting but left me puzzled about the role of the Group to Establish Trust Between the USSR and the U.S. If, as the article stated, "the Peace Committee chapters in hundreds of Soviet cities are widely disseminating information about the horrendous consequences of war," what does the handful of Trust group people, meeting secretly, hope to accomplish? Their activities would hardly be conducive to attaining their stated objective.

The official Soviet Peace Committee meets with thousands of foreign visitors in their Friendship Houses in every major city, where lively exchanges take place, with provocative and sometimes hostile questions being asked. If the Trust Group is interested in real people-to-people exchanges, reaching huge numbers of people, the Soviet Peace Committees couldn't be a better medium.

When I attended Peace Committee meetings this summer in various cities in the USSR, it became clear to me exactly what the difference is between the peace demonstrations here and those in the USSR. Our peace demonstrations are protesting our government's policy of spending billions for first-strike weapons, and its unwillingness to respond positively to disarmament overtures from the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Peace demonstrations, for which millions of people turn out, are in support of their government's no-first-strike pledge, its offers to reduce their nuclear arsenal, and to send a message to the world that peace is their fervent desire.

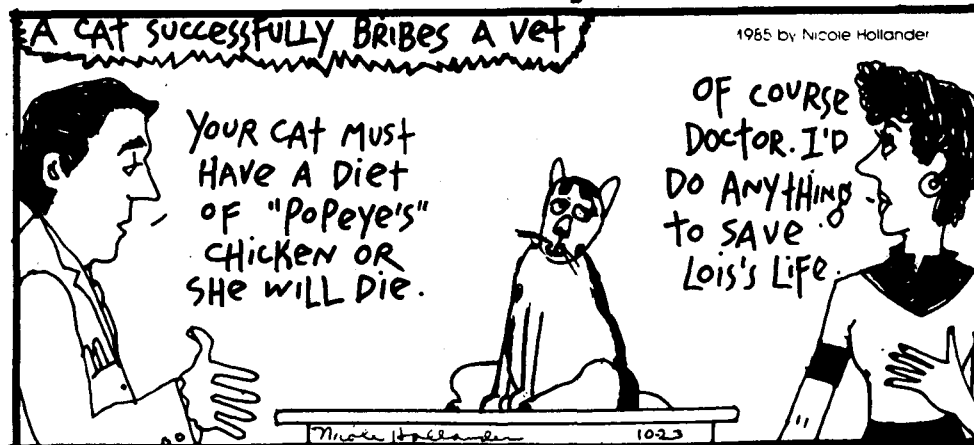
At a Young Pioneers' summer camp I visited, the children were making craft items for a sale to which their parents and friends were being invited. The proceeds were to go to their local peace committee!

Marilyn Pursley  
Berkeley, Calif.

## SYLVIA



## by Nicole Hollander





# The New Cold War's meaning

**T**HIS DISCUSSION OF THE Cold War, its nature and purposes, is an edited transcript of a radio debate between Fred Halliday and Noam Chomsky in London earlier this year. Fred Halliday is professor of international relations at the London School of Economics. His latest book is *The Second Cold War*. Noam Chomsky is a major critic of American involvement in Vietnam. His works include: *American Power and the New Mandarins* and *Toward a New Cold War*.

**Fred Halliday:** Noam, you say the United States and the Soviet Union have been losing influence over their respective allies since the '60s—or since their great days of the '50s—and that in a way they're not using Cold War rhetoric to prosecute a conflict against each other but to control people already subordinate to them. You've even said that the real enemies of the U.S. are not the Soviet Union so much as Japan, Western Europe—that they are seeking to control those nations.

On the other hand, I give more weight to the reality of the East/West conflict. You can't understand this new Cold War if you don't see that the conflict in fact has a lot of substance.

**Noam Chomsky:** I think the Soviet Union has wanted to be able to run their own dungeon without internal interference, and to compete for influence in the Third World—at targets of opportunity.

But the American version of the world order has been much more expansive. Essentially this reflects the relative power of the two states immediately after World War II. The U.S. was in a position of global dominance. They were producing 50 percent of world output, and using roughly 50 percent of world resources. And they were conscious of it.

The U.S. is an extremely open society, nothing like it in the world. We have tons and tons of very explicit documentary evidence. There was very careful planning for the post-war world. It was supposed to be a world open to penetration and exploitation by American-based, ultimately international, corporations.

The Soviet Union was plainly an impediment to these plans, first by its existence—it was simply not incorporated into what American planners called the Grand Area, the area subordinated to American influence. Second, it provided some protection for movements toward independence elsewhere in the Third World. And in fact, in the early '50s the U.S. pursued a rollback strategy. It was still hoping to break up the Soviet Union and to incorporate it into its system.

But over the years the Cold War has come to have an increasing utility for both superpowers. It's useful to them, and that's a major reason for its persistence. It's not a competition in which one gains where the other loses. Even the Soviet Union has to mobilize its own population when it carries out aggressive or brutal actions. So from the intervention in East Berlin to the invasion of Afghanistan, it has appealed to the threat of the foreign enemy—the Americans standing there, waving their missiles and carrying out savage acts.

And the U.S. has been doing the same thing. Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson actually takes pride in his memoirs for his success in the late '40s in convincing Congress by a series of sheer deceptions that the U.S. had to move into Greece and Turkey to defend them against the Russians. That has gone on up to the invasion of Grenada. It's been very successful in mobilizing Americans

for acts of aggression and intervention.

And a second factor must also be emphasized: in the U.S. the military system has become essentially the technique of industrial policy management. When the government has to intervene to subsidize high technology industry—as it repeatedly does—it does it through the military system. And in order to justify that you need a foreign enemy.

**Halliday:** Yes, but I think you understate two things. First, the degree to which the two powers still do dispute. This is not a

stable competition, "a dance of death" in which each knows its role and how far it can go. They know how far they can go in terms of nuclear weapons. But when it comes to the Third World, there are no rules and there's no agreement on where they should step and not step.

The onset of the second Cold War in the late '70s is a response by the U.S. not just to the lengthening of unemployment lines in the Rust Belt or to rebelling peasants in Nicaragua, but also to the intersecting of revolt in the Third World with Soviet power.

After the end of the Vietnam war—from 1974 until 1980—there was a wave of Third World revolutions. By my count, 13 countries went through revolutions. There was Ethiopia, Iran (with very spectacular consequences), Central America and others. These revolutions in themselves would support your view—they were revolts within the U.S. domain. But at the same time, they intersected with the conflict between East and West. Who was giving the Vietnamese the weapons to fight Americans? Who assisted the guerrillas in Africa to weaken the Portuguese? Who encouraged Nicaragua if not Cuba and, in some way, the Soviet Union, too?

**Chomsky:** Yes, but if you look at the actual incidents, American administra-





tions have never been seriously concerned if a newly-independent area becomes allied with the Soviet Union. In fact, we drive them to do that. These administrations even want them to do that.

You can see why. If we can drive Nicaragua into becoming a Cuban or Soviet client, that will justify the attacks we intend to carry out, to prevent them from extricating themselves from the world system that the U.S. controls.

It happens in every case. If we cannot crush and destroy one of the revolutionary movements, we will drive them into the hands of the Russians.

Why were they concerned about Communist revolution? The answer to that is given in a document by a quite important study of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation in 1955. They say that the threat of Communism is the inability or unwillingness of the Communist powers to complement the industrial societies of the West. The concern over Communism is that it's autocratic. It uses resources for internal needs. That's why we're always opposed to Communism.

What we care about is their subordination and integration into the Grand Area. So we opposed democracy in Guatemala, we opposed democracy in Chile and we even oppose fascist regimes occasionally if they're national fascists.

The U.S. was opposed to national capitalism in Europe after World War II. It's opposed to mild socialism and it's opposed to what's called Communism—typified by an inability and unwillingness to become complementary to Western industrial societies. But, if they are willing to integrate themselves into the West, then sometimes we're willing to accept them, like contemporary China. This is the thread that runs through everything.

**Halliday:** This is where you understate the reasons why, in most cases, the hawks win. Nicaragua, Algeria, many of these other cases, represent not just national control of the economy, not just independence as you construe it, but something more than that—they represent an alternative model of organizing society and alternative politics. And therefore the resistance, while it can be overcome in a few cases, goes to the heart of the American system. The American system of domestic polity, of relations between states, requires it to oppose, to crush and try to roll back revolutions.

In the conflicts between major world powers in the 19th century—between Britain and France or Britain and Russia—

powerful enough to overthrow the other. And there is this matter of nuclear weapons that threatens the destruction of everything. So there are controls on this rivalry. But nevertheless, the rivalry has a deep reality. Their values are very different—people often say there is no Cold War because nobody believes in Communism, nobody believes in capitalism. But Mrs. Thatcher believes in capitalism; Ronald Reagan believes in capitalism, and I would think that Mikhail Gorbachov believes in his view of Communism as well.

Second, the societies are organized in profoundly different ways. People in Russia often say: if you think this is capitalism, you should come and look at it. There is no MacDonalds, there is no Bank of America, there are no Coca-Cola advertisements on Nevsky Prospekt or Red Square in Moscow. And in the U.S., people are not given the kind of housing, social services, security that people in the East have.

Third, in the disputed area there is competition for influence. Revolutionary upheavals in the Third World are not created by the Soviet Union. But this rivalry between the two major powers and the two systems intersects with these insurrections in the Third World.

It may be true that in 1954 Guatemala was not about to go into the Soviet camp, but the overall pattern of upheaval in the Third World since 1945 has been that many of these revolutions have turned to the Soviet Union, driven to them in some cases, turned out of affinity in others. And affinity was very important in the Vietnamese case. Therefore the American refusals to accept these revolutions is not merely a White House policy mistake, it's not merely a refusal to accept independence or autarchy in general, it also reflects the refusal to accept this alternative social system that is based on different values and different systems of organization.

**Chomsky:** Part of what you say is true, but part of it in my view is simply mystical—the talk about alternative social systems and values and so on I think is really mysticism. They're different, but that's not the problem. You got to the point when you said there are no MacDonalds and there's no Coca-Cola and so on. The existence of the Soviet Union is incompatible with the American view of world order because it is not freely open to penetration by American capital, its resources are not freely available.

**CHOMSKY:** *Military investment has become the American way of industrial policy management. And in order to justify military spending you need a foreign enemy. In recent American history you continually see the conjunction of extended military intervention overseas and the appeal to the Russian threat. That's extremely useful and we're locked into it. It's a major reason for the persistence of the Cold War.*

these were conflicts among societies and politics organized in roughly similar ways. They were competing for territory, economic influence, strategic weight, and these elements are present in the rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

But there's something further. These societies and political systems are organized in very different ways, ways that present a threat to each other, even though the degree of the threat is exaggerated. Both of them would like to gain ground at the expense of the other, and ultimately eliminate the other from the face of the earth. The Russians would like to see a world organized in the way they are organized, and the Americans would like to see American-style capitalism—their view of the free world—prevail everywhere.

They live together because neither is

**Halliday:** But Japan is not freely open to American—

**Chomsky:** Japan is very open and where it is not there is continual conflict.

During and after World War II, the U.S. planned the Grand Area to be the area strategically necessary for world control, the area that would be essentially subordinated to the needs of the American economy. But the point was that there had to be free possibility for export of capital, for exploitation of the resources, for investment overseas. That's the crucial part.

The U.S. has acted to maximize these objectives, and if we look through the incidents of the Cold War, whether it's the rebuilding of European capitalism in terms that would integrate it and in large part subordinate it to the U.S., or at Middle East policy or Asia policy or Central

America policy, we discover this unifying thread. The U.S. has acted and will continue to act to try to create a system in which what they called free trade imperialism in the 19th century will work.

### Vietnam—a case in point

**Halliday:** Much of what you say suggests that the Vietnam war—both how it developed and its outcome—is central to the different ways in which we look at post-war history. In my view, first of all, the whole development of the Vietnam war, particularly since serious American involvement in the late '50s, demonstrated that the view of the world of American strategic planners was erroneous. Whatever they thought they were doing about controlling the Grand Area, they did not understand the forces involved. But their perception of Vietnam and its strategic importance showed a clear awareness of conflict between the capitalist American way of running the world and the Soviet Communist way.

That war was not just any old war in the Third World. And the outcome of the war was a very signal defeat for the U.S.—not only the first major defeat the U.S. has ever suffered in a war, but also one that greatly weakened the American

**HALLIDAY:** *The Soviet Union and the United States live together because neither is powerful enough to overthrow the other, but power and wealth are organized and distributed in quite different ways in these countries. And both systems have a hegemonic intent and hegemonic elements.*

economy internally and vis-a-vis its competitors, and sent a signal around the world to other revolutionary movements that the U.S. could be defeated. It greatly encouraged the defeat of the Portuguese colonies in Africa. It made possible Cuban intervention in Angola. It encouraged the revolutions in Central America.

Of course, the Vietnamese paid a terrible price—over two million dead. Of course, their society, their ecology has been terribly damaged for decades, maybe hundreds of years. But nevertheless, a country of 16 million people did defeat the United States and that regime has consolidated itself.

They have now, of course, also extended their influence through the war with Cambodia. Nothing could demonstrate more clearly the dimension of the American defeat than the fact that even 10 or more years after the American troops left Vietnam, there is still an enormous and healthy reluctance in the U.S. to sending troops abroad.

For all that Reagan said in his first term about intervening in the Third World and overcoming the Vietnam syndrome, all they could drum up was this pathetic *promenade militaire* in Grenada. They had to pull their troops out of Lebanon because American public opinion wouldn't wash it. One of the major problems in sending troops to Central America is that the American public opinion—however bellicose it is—won't buy it.

So the Vietnamese not only defeated the U.S. inside Vietnam, but they defeated the U.S. globally, and the impact is still with us.

**Chomsky:** Well, I agree with everything you've said, but it's exactly half the story. Now let's turn to the other half. Here we have to ask what the American goals were, and those we know very well from the documentary record. American policy with regard to Indochina was set pretty well in the late '40s and early '50s, within the general framework of Grand Area planning. The goal was an international order open to penetration by American-based enterprise and exploitation of its resources.

Why was Vietnam important? Vietnam was important not for itself—there were

virtually no American interests in Indochina despite some talk by Eisenhower about tin and tungsten and so on. It was important within the framework of the domino theory—now I mean the rational domino theory.

The theory was that an independent South Vietnam under so-called Communist control would be able to carry out mass mobilization and some degree of modernization and industrialization, leading to a social form that would be meaningful in terms of the Asian poor and could have a demonstration effect elsewhere—in Thailand, in Malaysia, Indonesia. Ultimately, this might lead to a system in which Southeast and South Asia would be extricated from the Grand Area—and under Communist control. It could be a Communism opposed to the Russians or opposed to the Chinese—that didn't matter. It would be out of American control and not open to the international capital system of exploitation and investment.

Then the next step—and it's the crucial step—would be that what John Dower once called the super-domino would fall, namely Japan. Japan, which they always recognized would be the industrial center of Asia, had its natural markets and sources of resources in this region, and would be

forced to accommodate it. In effect, we would have a system like the one Japan was attempting to construct in the '30s—a new order, a system in large parts of Asia with an industrial Japan at its heartland, from which the U.S. would be excluded. And the U.S. was not prepared in the late '40s to lose World War II. That was the picture that they had in mind.

Now let's look at the outcome. We talked about the negative effects for American policy, but there's another side. Vietnam is not going to have a demonstration effect that will lead to development of independent and successful peasant-based movements in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia. In Vietnam itself the U.S. didn't achieve its ends—Vietnam is not part of the American system. But in the region they achieved their ends, and concern over Vietnam was regional. So I think the conventional view that the U.S. suffered a defeat is partially true, but only partly.

### The arms race

**Halliday:** Looking at the issue of intervention and what lies behind it—the new build-up of American power in the second Cold War—a question arises: is the build-up, military rhetoric and the vastly increased military expenditure of the U.S. and its allies primarily explained by the need to intervene in the Third World, to discipline the Grand Area?

The arms race has multiple functions. It serves a domestic function. Arms spending has a Keynesian effect for some sectors of the American economy. That's what the arms lobbies are all about in Washington. And there is a conservative ideological benefit. If you get people to believe in the army, if you raise the status of the army that clearly serves to strengthen conservative values.

And when it comes to foreign purposes—and I think these are still the most important ones—we can't get away from the fact that the arms race, particularly the arms races pursued by the U.S., has a primary target, which is the Soviet Union. In other words, it can't just be explained. The expenditure, the values, the propaganda about the arms race and the Soviet threat are not just about the

*Continued on page 22*



## AMERICAN HISTORY

# Rewriting the Revolution

## The American Revolution

By Edward Countryman  
Hill & Wang, 242 pp., \$7.95

By Sean Wilentz

EDWARD COUNTRYMAN'S fine concise history of the American Revolution makes us think about the Revolution's meaning and legacy. For much of our history since 1776, the Revolution has inspired leftist thinkers and movements, as the embodiment of egalitarian ideals. But ever since World War I and the crisis of democratic socialism, leftists have been confused about the Revolution's aims and achievements.

Orthodox Marxists note the Revolution's "progressive" features—but usually stress the importance of replacing its basically "bourgeois" notions of democratic equality with proletarian internationalism. Occasionally, as during the Popular Front of the '30s, leftists have created a "radical" version of the break with Britain, dusting off old 18th-century political icons and placing them beside those of the 20th century. Yet the supposed ideological kinship between George Washington and Vladimir Lenin has always been spurious, and done more to obscure and demean the Revolution than to clarify its importance.

Nor have most attempts at a left reappropriation of the Spirit of '76 done much to end the confusion about the Revolution's enduring significance. (The Pop Front, even at its most enthusiastic, always had problems with the Founding Fathers: was it politically correct, some asked, to praise slaveholding squires like Washington with the Scottsboro Boys in prison?)

The New Left seemed to mark a genuine rediscovery of the Revolution's traditions, but all too quickly dissolved into neo-Stalinist (or pseudo-democratic) grouplets. The hearty band that formed the People's Bicentennial Commission did its best to claim the Revolution for the left—but it wasn't enough: tall ships and Coca-Cola carried the day. Still, a fresh and more satisfying reevaluation of the Revolution was well underway in 1976—not in the streets, but in university libraries and seminar rooms.

Ten years later, a new generation of radical scholars has completed its first important scholarly statements. In doing so, they have managed far more than simply "getting right" with the Revolution. They have helped completely change the way academics talk about the nation's political origins, overturning mainstream consensus interpretations. Unfortunately, most of their work remains locked up in academic journals and graduate school reading lists. Edward Countryman's great service is to integrate this revisionist scholarship into an intelligent whole and make it accessible to a wide audience with his book *The American Revolution*.

### The new wave

Countryman is well-suited to the job; his prize-winning *A People in Revolution* (1981) is one of the key

monographs in the new wave. That earlier volume was remarkable for its attempt to set the conventional political history of the Revolution—what historian Jesse Lemisch once called the history of Great White Men—against the background of popular movements and political rifts among the rebellious colonials. If anything, *The American Revolution* has even greater success in showing how ordinary Americans experienced and shaped the only successful political revolution of the age.

Countryman describes his subject mainly in terms of the growth of popular political initiative and (within limits) democratic aspirations. Prior to the 1760s, a network of economic power, social prestige and political deference—emanating in part from London but even more from the colonial gentry and mercantile elite—held

tually declare their independence. Popular political engagement quickened the resistance.

In one of his best chapters, Countryman describes how urban popular violence, commonplace well before 1776, gradually turned into a focal point of patriot politics. "Without crowd action" Countryman makes plain, "there would have been no resistance movement."

Between 1774 and 1776, a popular political presence, unlike any that had preceded it, helped push the colonies from resistance to revolution.

Yet despite John Adams' oft-quoted remark that the Revolution had been completed in Americans' hearts long before independence, 1776 was but an important early turning point in the Revolution's popular history. Having broken with the Empire, Americans in-

fights broke out over the merits of simple (and, in some places, radical) popular democracy and more conservative arrangements that linked political rights to property holding. Those fights, as Countryman notes, spread far beyond the convention halls, to the plain citizens of the towns and cities, and the soldiers in Washington's army and in the militia.

In short, the Revolution turned into a kind of testing ground for popular democracy. By the time victory came at Yorktown, Americans had two decades of experience with political crowds, popular committees and coalition-building. They had thought over—and fought over—some of the most eye-opening political notions the world had ever known. Even then, though, the Revolution was not over.

The new republic of the 1780s, held together by the loose-knit Articles of Confederation, alarmed some of those who had fought hard to secure its independence. Conservative men of property and standing like Eldbridge Gerry feared an "excess of democracy," as middling men with mud on their boots asserted their political rights. Men of commerce—led by

of a system in which capital would be safe." The final act of the Revolution was also a reaction against the Revolution, a rejection of radical democracy. But it also established a polity that was fully in tune with what, in the 18th century, were "the most progressive economic forces in the world"—a policy that has retained its legitimacy to this day.

### Not definitive

Countryman tells this story clearly and in detail. He captures the main thrust of popular politics and ideology very well, and connects it nicely to the more familiar textbook events of the Revolution. He also humanizes his history by including extended vignettes of six very different lives from the revolutionary generation, including a Boston shoemaker, a New England farmwife and a South Carolina slave.

Which is not to say the book is definitive or flawless. Countryman's writing, while always clear, suffers through its dry spells, especially when the author discusses academic controversies. Countryman's focus on American politics is justified, but it also blurs some important matters. The book tells us little, for example, about the Revolutionary war, apart from the political problems associated with the fighting—even though the war was a central part of the revolutionary experience, for soldiers and civilians alike.

Countryman is tentative about setting the American events in the larger context of the age of revolution. He offers good accounts of economic thought and of Americans' conflicting visions about what form of political economy was best suited to a republic. But the Revolution's place in the larger economic and social history of American and world capitalist development still awaits a more ambitious treatment. The Constitution, meanwhile, appears in overly stark terms, and Countryman's grudging praise for it as economically "progressive" sounds a bit forced. Whatever its framers' intentions, the Constitution wound up as a compromise, in which the more imperious conservatives like Hamilton were forced to make important concessions to popular democracy. It would take another century of struggle before the Hamiltonian Federalist vision was at last triumphant.

The meaning of the American Revolution remains open to debate and further reflection. Better than any comparable treatment, *The American Revolution* traces the history of the Revolution as a popular political movement. It thus helps us better understand the Revolution's importance as the primal moment of American democratic radicalism. Dr. Thomas Young, one of the Revolution's many radical spirits, declared at one point that republican America would not long endure if "men of some rank" succeeded in recreating "the system of Lord and Vassal, or principal and dependent." Such words thrilled some of Dr. Young's countrymen, shocked others and remained at the heart of American political conflict for decades thereafter. As Countryman suggests, they are still worth pondering—now more than ever.

Sean Wilentz is the author of *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class 1788-1850*.



Carting effigies in a demonstration against the Stamp Act in Connecticut in 1765.

sway in America. Ordinary farmers and artisans of the "middling" sort were, at best, half-participants in formal politics; sporadic social violence, urban and rural, pressed the demands of debtors and tenants, but did not challenge the imperial status quo.

With the economic and political crises that followed the Seven Years' War, cracks began to appear in the colonial political edifice. Britain's attempts to challenge the colonies' autonomy with new trade regulations and taxes aroused opposition across class lines, moving the colonists to nullify the imperial reforms and even-

tended to build an entirely new political order, a New World republic. Drawing on a rich heritage of civic humanism and English libertarianism, they cast their struggle in almost utopian terms. But Americans of different backgrounds disagreed sharply about what the republican heritage meant and what their new republic should look like.

Intense political debates followed, centered, as Countryman explained, on the drafting of the various state constitutions between 1776 and 1780. Outcomes varied widely from state to state, but in virtually every case, bitter

the capitalist visionary Alexander Hamilton—worried about the security of trade and finance as well as popular politics. Moderate planter republicans like James Madison likewise grew wary of insurgent debtors, and the possibilities that class jealousies would undermine political stability.

In 1787, these men and their allies got to work, and went on to win (not altogether legally) the repudiation of the Articles of Confederation and the ratification of the Constitution. A new science of politics emerged, what Countryman calls "a political sociology



**Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family**  
By Shirley Christian  
Random House, 322 pp., \$19.95

By Eldon Kenworthy

TWO BATTLES ARE BEING fought over Nicaragua today. One concerns policy, the other interpretation. They are connected in that U.S. leaders are not comfortable attacking another government without first blaming it: *they* broke agreements; *they* can't be trusted; *they* brought it on themselves. The battle over interpretation has ramifications beyond current policy, however.

Whatever interpretation of Nicaragua settled into the American imagination, encoded in the catchwords of the evening news, will shape our response to revolutions yet to come in Central America. Just as current policy is framed by the "lessons" of Cuba and Vietnam, "lessons" derived from Nicaragua will shape future U.S. responses to revolutionary nationalism and Marxism.

"Our students will not recognize the urgency in Nicaragua if they cannot recognize the history that is threatening to repeat itself." Secretary of Education William Bennett had Cuba clearly in mind. "I believe that events in Nicaragua stand today about where they stood in Cuba at the time of the Bay of Pigs," echoes Jeane Kirkpatrick, the implication being don't botch the invasion this time.

Thus the steamroller of precedent flattens fresh information, reinforcing policymakers who don't wish to hear the Sandinistas anyway. Since "the Sandinistas are Communists," their "agreements are lies." "You cannot negotiate a deal with Communists that is based on good will and trust"—the views of National Security Adviser McFarlane and Assistant Secretary of State for the Hemisphere Abrams, as reported August 18 by Shirley Christian in her other role as journalist with the *New York Times* Washington bureau.

This battle over the meaning of Nicaragua pits the Reagan administration and the right against liberals and the left, with religious groups playing an important role in both camps. Opponents of the administration rely on first-hand accounts to deflate the airy generalizations that reduce Nicaragua to a struggle between "totalitarian terrorists" and "freedom fighters." Witness for Peace tells us what those "freedom fighters" actually do in the villages they overrun; the Latin American Studies Association uses on-site observation to refute White House characterizations of the Nicaraguan election as a "sham"; the Institute for Policy Studies tracks down distortions in administration testimony to Congress.

Myths backed by the authority of the White House and disseminated through the right's expanding media empire are hard to puncture, however, without mainstream media joining in. Their willingness to do so depends on prominent politicians restating what the nuns and academics, working diplomats and professional delegations report. What matters is not what is true but who voices it. With CBS and National Public Radio under attack by the right, and prominent Democrats backing off from Nicaragua for fear of appearing "soft" on foreign affairs, is it any wonder that stories such as a terrorist unit within the

*contra* go unreported?

Against this background Christian's is not just another book on Sandinista Nicaragua. To my knowledge it is the first written by a reporter from a prestigious U.S. newspaper. Pitched to a broad audience, reviewed on the front page of the *Time's* "Book Review," *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family* displays all the techniques journalists employ to convey that theirs is an "eyewitness account" and "an insider's experience." Christian has the credentials of one who has been there, terrain up till now dominated by critics of U.S. policy.

What Christian delivers, however, is pure Reagan. This she does by ignoring evidence she herself cites, by self-serving omissions and by confining her interviews, for the most part, to the



*Shirley Christian's book, Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family, lacks an informed sense of the history and conditions of the 80 percent of the Nicaraguan population that isn't elite. What she delivers is pure Reagan.*

political, economic and religious leaders of Managua. The book is a good read, full of conversation and anecdote. Passages describing the multiple negotiations underway as Somoza's rule unraveled are excellent. All that her account lacks is an informed sense of the history and conditions of that 80 percent of the population that isn't elite.

The subtitle gives it away. As Joan Didion was in El Salvador, Christian is struck by how many leaders of the left and the right have family ties. In countries of a few million inhabitants, with a culture that keeps track of such things, is this surprising? To Christian, the revolution and its outcome was and remains a struggle within "the family": "...it was not the masses, but the economic and political elites who made it possible for the Sandinistas to march triumphantly into Managua in July 1979."

Following the triumph, the FSLN "created" mass organizations in order to submit the country

to its "Leninist structure." But Christian still sees the struggle as largely one among elites, "not between the rich and the poor." Given an invasion today, "the majority would go with the wind," joining whichever was perceived to be the stronger side.

In her description of the revolution, however, unassimilated evidence muddies these conclusions. Christian acknowledges that the Indian artisans of Monimbo "set off the country's first mass uprising" in 1978. Later, Diriamba "fell to the rebels, but it was accomplished not by organized Sandinistas but by local teenagers who put their own lives on the line.... Increasingly, this was the pattern of action."

Later, when Christian wants us to believe that rural workers merely exchanged one *patron* for another as the FSLN turned *Somocista* estates into state farms or cooperatives, she ignores the extensive farmworkers union, mentioning it only in passing at the very end of a chapter on

"Workers and Peasants," and hiding the fact that the union antedates the Sandinistas' coming to power.

#### Elitist perspective

From this elitist perspective, certain "truths" follow. First, had Carter not been a wimp, or Vance not upstaged Brzezinski, it would have been possible to achieve the *Somocismo sin Somoza* favored by the Archbishop Obando y Bravo and most Nicaraguan businessmen. The "growing momentum and power of the non-violent opposition" is centerstage in Christian's analysis. Too bad "the United States' freedom of action was still hampered by the old fears and bugaboos about intervention in the region."

Second, remaining innocent of the history of grassroots organizing in Nicaragua, Christian portrays the FSLN as a few Leninists manipulating the masses. We are treated to the Reagan litany of "a totalitarian regime" and "a repres-

ive left-wing dictatorship." The "needs" and "dreams" of "Nicaraguans" lie with those "true democrats" who now sponsor the *contra* war. The "*contras*' own cause" is "that of the entire Nicaraguan opposition"—which must surprise prominent opposition figures who have denounced the main *contra* organization, such as Edgar Chamorro and Celmente Guido, even Eden Pastora.

In describing the November 1984 election in Nicaragua, in a book apparently finished several months afterward, Christian hides from the reader evidence that would blunt her interpretation of a Nicaragua falling deeper into totalitarianism. No mention is made of Washington's pressure on opposition leaders to pull out of the election. Does Christian not read the stories her fellow *Times* reporters file, such as Taubman's of October 21 or Kinzer's of October 31? Christian interprets the Sandinista platform in that election as "back[ing] away from many of the commitments to political and economic pluralism" made before the FSLN was triumphant.

She omits all mention of the accord signed by the seven parties participating in the election, which outlines the political system to be embodied in the Constitution about to be drafted. She fails to take note of how the newly elected National Assembly differs from the Council of State that preceded it. No mention here of reforms slated for the local Committees of Defense. All these changes are in the direction of greater conformity to liberal democratic practices.

Finally, just as Washington could have interceded on behalf of the "right" elites back in 1979, it still can today. In an "Epilogue" that lays aside the pretense of objective reporting—the interviewing of a leftist leader for every rightist leader interviewed, the visiting of a "popular" church for every mass witnessed in a church loyal to the hierarchy—Christian embraces current Reagan policy. Summarized: U.S. security requires Nicaraguan democracy [our style] that in turn requires U.S. intervention, possibly covert and through surrogates.

Only "a political democracy on U.S. or European lines" will keep its agreements, we are told. The fallacy is obvious. When it is in their interests, most states keep their word; when it is not, most states do not. Ideology has nothing to do with it. Why does Washington have agreements with China or the Soviet Union? The governments of small states inside the sphere of influence of a large, hostile power probably have more inducement to see that international agreements are kept than anyone else. To argue that "...nothing known about the Sandinistas so far suggest that they would substantially alter their policies except in the face of real or implied military force" is a self-serving, self-fulfilling prophecy.

There is no room in Christian's analysis for Contadora, which is mentioned in passing on the last page of the book. She wants Americans to see through "the perjorative connotation to the word intervention" and embrace "a more interventionist policy than the United States has been willing to commit itself to in recent history."

Eldon Kenworthy teaches at Cornell University. His latest analysis of U.S. policy toward Central America appeared in *Current History*, March 1985.



By Mimi Bluestone

**R**UDY VELOZ, SELF-PROCLAIMED "New Yorican" and the hero of *Crossover Dreams* lives in El Barrio where he earns his living as a salsa singer. It's a two-gigs-a-night, \$50-a-gig hustle, and Rudy is understandably tired of it. He desperately wants to "cross over" to the midtown world of the big-label record companies.

Most of the characters in *Almonds and Raisins* live in New York, too, and they, like Rudy, dream about America-style success. But they inhabit not only a different neighborhood but another era. While Rudy lives uptown in present-day New York, the Yiddish-speaking Eastern European immigrants shown in *Almonds and Raisins* (the name comes from a Yiddish lullaby) live on the city's lower east side in the years between the turn of the century and World War II.

*Almonds and Raisins* and *Crossover Dreams* are two very different movies. *Dreams'* tight story line focuses on a single character, played by real-life salsa star Ruben Blades. *Raisins* is a documentary about the Yiddish-language cinema that bloomed in New York during the years between the two world wars. Its characters have been rescued—on celluloid, at least—from some of the 300-odd films that were made in Yiddish. Its scenes are full of the actors, actresses and singers who, though little known outside their own community, were the cream of Yiddish stage and screen: Molly Picon, Moyshe Oysher, Zee Scooler and Celia Adler, to name a few.

#### Common elements

So what do these films have in common? Each conveys the spirit of its respective community, affectionately and with gusto. Some of *Dreams'* finest photography shows the vitality of street life amid the uncollected garbage of the *barrio*: the rooftop musicians, the ice vendor who dances with his cart, the Saturday night glamour of dancers moving to salsa's irresistible polyrhythms, Rudy joking over a snack of deep-fried *cuchifritos* with his girlfriend Lizzie (Elizabeth Pena).

Director Leon Ichaso doesn't try to make it pretty, but he has a strong feel for what is visually lyrical about the city. In one of the film's most beautiful sequences, the camera zooms in on a street mime who, pushing silently at walls on every side, speaks eloquently to Rudy's isolation.

The Yiddish-speaking filmmakers saw a cold grandeur in New York's early 20th-century skyline. In their own neighborhoods they saw sewing machine sweatshops, immigrants exploiting fellow immigrants, strikes and strikebreakers, families separated by war or pulled apart by the endless swirl of the huge and menacing new city—and all of this became the meat of Yiddish stage and film melodrama. The goal, apparently, was to bring the entire audience to tears; this is, after all, the culture that made a gift to English of the word *schmaltz*.

These Yiddish filmmakers answered their audience's desire to belong in America by creating entire worlds in which policemen, judges and even cowboys spoke Yiddish. To a contemporary audience, the incongruity becomes hilarious when a gun-toting female saloonkeeper sends the bad guys



## FILM

# Assimilation for fun and profit

packing with a tough, "Aroys! Aroys!" (Away! Away!)

Beyond celebrating their respective communities, *Dreams* and *Raisins* both explore the explosive tensions between community and the seductions of the larger world. Reflecting their audience's striving to merge with the *Gan Eden* (Garden of Eden) of America, Yiddish filmmakers showed the glories of immigrants' children who become doctors and lawyers.

But the price of assimilation is an important theme in the Yiddish cinema, as it is for Rudy Veloz. Rudy, exhausted from the hustle of the salsa circuit, is willing to do just about anything the big-label record company wants, or whatever he thinks it wants. He'll sing empty-headed English lyrics, cut off his sideburns, strike silly poses for publicity shots, or fire his best friend Orlando, a trumpet player played by Shawn Elliot.

*Overture to Glory*, one of the

films excerpted in *Raisins*, is about a cantor in a similar position. Lured into an operatic career by Gentile admirers, he's about to make his stage debut on Yom Kippur eve when he receives the terrible news that his son has died. In a drenching storm, he finds his way back to the lights of his synagogue, makes a dramatic entrance in time to sing the climactic part of the atonement day service and, duty done, expires. Rudy's story isn't quite as tragic, but he miscalculates badly when he bets on the bigtime and severs his *barrio* ties.

Both movies have their limitations. *Dreams'* story is really quite simple and the main character pretty shallow. If Rudy feels conflicted about his choices it doesn't show until everything caves in. *Raisins'* presentation is thematically and chronologically confusing, and the constant cutting back and forth between different excerpted movies is at times bewildering. The film is sparse on historical context, and director Russ Karel, who wrote the narrative with David Elstein, doesn't include a word about the relationship of Yiddish stage or Yiddish radio to Yiddish film.

But neither film is simply a matter of plot or organization. *Raisins* succeeds on the emotional energy of its material and, at times, its music.

Music is more central to the story of *Dreams*. While Rudy's friends and fellow *salseros* include some of New York's finest Latin musicians, his bubblegum crossover tune is as trite as are the friendships he develops in the record industry. The story may be uncomplicated, but it resonates with real-life situations right from the first scene, a mad dash through traffic from one gig to the next. *Dreams* touches all the details of the salsa musician's life and has in Ruben Blades, a terrific lead. The cast is also outstanding.

Blades himself is one of the most interesting songwriters in salsa today and he's a Harvard-educated lawyer to boot. But that's another story—a different kind of crossover story. Unlike Rudy, both Blades and *Crossover Dreams* are reaching audiences beyond the Hispanic community without losing track of themselves.

**Mimi Bluestone** is a writer and editor in New York.

## FILM CLIPS

Many cities throughout the nation have faced corporate disinvestment and deindustrialization. Most have resigned themselves to plant closings and the deterioration of their communities are somehow part of a "natural" economic order. However, this was not the case in Youngstown, Ohio. The story of Youngstown's struggle to save its steel mills—both its achievements and disappointments—has been dramatically told by Dorie Krauss and Carol Greenwald in their documentary *Shout Youngstown!*

Using interviews combined with still photos, archival footage and set to the original music of Si Kahn, the documentary outlines how community activists and local steelworkers overcame both individual inertia and institutional resistance to gain acceptance of the principle of community ownership.

With each successive plant

closing, Krauss and Greenwald depict the collective outrage and changing consciousness of a community scorned by absentee corporate managers. Claims in the documentary by the likes of David Roderick, president of U.S. Steel, that the mill closings were due to the unavailability of capital, inadequate depreciation or environmental requirements seem vacuous when juxtaposed with a historical accounting by steelworkers of corporate neglect and malfeasance in operating the steel mills.

Failing to accept the corporate justifications and inevitability of the plant shutdown, the documentary describes how the steelworkers organized various coalitions, lawsuits and even direct actions that had as their focus community ownership. Yet, each tactic met resistance in the form of governmental or judicial decisions and succumbed to the politics of post-

ponement and evasion.

While unsuccessful in actually achieving community ownership, Youngstown's struggle was not vain. As workers in the documentary testify, "messing around with free enterprise" is a complicated proposition, at best, in which you can't expect corporate America and their political functionaries to roll over and accept community ownership on the scale suggested in Youngstown.

Nevertheless, Youngstown's fight against shutdowns has advanced the thinking of other communities facing plant closings and corporate disinvestment. The result has been greater resistance and preparation in dealing with plant shutdowns.

—John Russo

**John Russo** is the director of *Labor Studies* at Youngstown State University in Ohio. For more information, contact the Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

By Connie Blitt &amp; Dennis Bernstein

**I**T SEEMS TO ME WHAT'S HAPPENING in the U.S. at the present time is part of this move to the right—to conservatism. You find this insistence on labels, identifying what is offensive, or pornographic, or obscene. The parallel with South Africa is that in South Africa freedom is an obscenity, just as people who talk of equality are regarded as the enemies of the state. Even to assert one's humanity, if you are not white, is to challenge one of the basic notions of the state.

—Dennis Brutus, South African poet-in-exile at New Music Seminar on September 27

The New Right's impact on every form of public communication is unmistakably clear. A frontal attack on freedom of speech and expression, led by Ed Meese, Jerry Falwell and a host of others in the White House and Congress, has sent investigative journalists and their editors running for cover. But news and information organizations have not been the only targets of this right-wing assault. In recent years funding sources for many creators and cultural performers have dried up as Reagan administration appointees at federal funding institutions appear more interested in financing projects like the recreation of battle scenes from the Civil War than in those that might inspire social change or portray the urban poor's plight in Reagan's '80s.

Of late, the new religious right has turned its attention from behind-the-scenes manipulation of media organizations and funding sources to the artists' and performers' works. Only last month dapper Frank Zappa, rock'n'roll's eclectic guitarist, found himself on Capitol Hill defending his right to free expression. He refused to bow to the demands of the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC), recently formed by a few disgruntled Congressmen's wives, to brown-wrap and label his albums according to some newly devised code of decency. (Several major record companies have already told the PMRC they will place warning stickers on albums that contain "explicit language.")

Indeed, politics were conspicuous at this year's New Music Seminar as the sixth annual gathering of the rock, pop and black music industry commenced in late September to talk shop and assess the music industry's future. Zappa's opening remarks featured a scathing rebuttal of the PMRC, which he referred to as "the wives of Big Brother," and a warning that its blatant attempts at censorship would not stop at rock music.

In what Dennis Brutus called a "quantum leap forward" in the music industry's political awareness, many musicians, music video producers and record company reps drew the connection between word censoring confronting them in the U.S. and the even more severe censorship of human dignity facing South African blacks. Sharing the keynote platform with Zappa was chairman of the Black Music Association and founder of Solar Records Dick Griffey.

It is not enough "to write great lyrics and melodies and music for people to boogie by," said Griffey. "It is our responsibility to teach and communicate to people and make them aware of today's great-



## MUSIC

# Playing music in a key of freedom

est atrocity, apartheid." Griffey then spoke of his own upbringing in a *bantustan* called Nashville, Tenn., where he was forced to ride at the back of the bus and was refused admission to the neighborhood public school because he was black. He reminded the audience that if such a seminar had taken place in South Africa "they'd put all of you in jail."

## Apartheid and the music industry

In 1976-77 black children, protesting South Africa's educational system, sang Pink Floyd's "The Wall"—"We don't want no education, We don't need no thought control." The song was immediately banned. And as schoolchildren boycotted classes in South Africa earlier this year, they sang "We Are the World" and were attacked by police.

boycott," explained panelist Elombe Brath of the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, "is the same as the divestment movement: it is the artist himself divesting from South Africa." Since the UN began keeping a list of the performers who go to South Africa, many have turned down millions to play at various entertainment resorts around the country. After learning of the boycott, Tina Turner, Kenny Rogers and many others who have played in South Africa have apologized publicly.

Half the records sold in South Africa come from the U.S. and other Western countries. Abner, past president of Motown Records and currently Stevie Wonder's personal manager, encouraged artists to tell the record companies they work with, "I license you my product for the entire world with the exception of South Africa."

ists of the recent problems faced by the Soweto-based Malopoets, who were denied work permits by the Musicians Union in London solely because they are from South Africa. According to Neo Mnumzama of the African National Congress, it is important that we are careful not to "throw out the baby with the bath water." Those who withdraw support from the victims of apartheid "begin to become collaborators of apartheid," he warned.

## Singing your politics.

The fury and rhythm of popular music skips the brain and goes right to the blood. Often music influences people in ways politicians cannot, and Little Steven, who came to prominence playing with Bruce Springsteen, knows it. A super-star collaboration "Sun City," conceived by the young rock'n'roller to urge musicians and performers not to play in South Africa, premiered at the New Music Seminar during the apartheid panel and received enthusiastic applause. "We use Sun City [South Africa's extravagant resort complex] as a symbol of the whole apartheid system," said Little Steven (see accompanying article).

Little Steven was joined on the panel by British composer-per-



## Musicians expose Sun City mirage

Sun City is South Africa's international hot spot, where apartheid takes off its clothes to make way for interracial sex and gambling. The white minority's sparkling, high-rise resort, billed as "the fun capital of Southern Africa," stands above the squalor and widespread poverty of rural Bophuthatswana, one of the 10 *bantustans* or black "homelands" designated by the Pretoria government as independent countries within the borders of South Africa.

It is on these fragmented tracts of barren land, which comprise 13 percent of South Africa's territory, that 72 percent of the country's population are forced to live. The contrast, one South African exile told *In These Times*, between the easy life offered those who visit Sun City and the daily struggle faced by those who subsist around its borders is "nothing less than obscene."

Yet, according to Karen Morgan of the South African Tourism Board, Sun City is "not at all segregated" and "anybody can go as long as they have the money." Whether or not blacks are truly welcome at Sun City, segregation is defacto. For with an average yearly income of \$400 in Bophuthatswana, even the suggestion of a visit to the resort by local inhabitants is, at best, a cruel joke. Despite Morgan's claims to the contrary, blacks are a rare sight at Sun City, except for those who work as prostitutes or waiters and waitresses serving exotic drinks to the cosmopolitan jet set.

## A nice place to visit

Ever since Frank Sinatra opened Sun City's Superbowl auditorium in 1978, performers and athletes have flocked to the extravagant entertainment complex and plucked fat pay checks. Linda Ronstadt, Liza Minelli, Rod Stewart, Glen Campbell, the Beach Boys and Cher are among the long list of superstars who have performed in the front yard of forced despair.

Performers routinely justify their lucrative visits to Sun City by maintaining that they are not going to racist, white South Africa, but to a separate country.

Hence, their presence in the *bantustans* lends credence to South Africa's grand deception of black independence through forced relocation, one of the cornerstones of apartheid.

South African poet-in-exile Dennis Brutus, who led the fight to exclude his country from participating in the Olympic games, is particularly concerned about black Americans who continue to perform in South Africa. Brutus pointed out that historically slave masters, like those currently in power in Pretoria, have "not merely been content to have slaves working for them; the slaves were always asked to dance for the master."

A growing number of well-known artists and performers have turned down outlandish sums of money offered them to play in South Africa, however, and many have instead committed themselves to projects that use their stardom and popularity to call attention to cruelties imposed upon blacks by apartheid. The latest is "Sun City," an anti-apartheid protest song conceived by Little Steven (Van Zandt), and featuring dozens of prominent performers, including Jimmy Cliff, Lou Reed, Bonnie Raitt, Miles Davis and salsa star Ray Barretto. The song's message, as stated in the chorus, is "I ain't gonna play Sun City" and neither should you.

According to Little Steven, founding member of the Disciples of Soul and formerly a member of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band, the disk was conceived "as a statement of solidarity with the South African freedom movement," in part because our government has been "extraordinarily remiss in this area." Little Steven sees "Sun City" as a natural progression from the USA/Africa hit "We Are the World," and suggests that it reflects many musicians' deepening commitment to social concerns. "Just as many of us sang out on behalf of the victims of Africa's famine," he said, "we are singing out also for those who are hungry for freedom."

"I feel great and wonderful that artists are taking a stand," said Rick Dutka, vice president of Tommy Boy Records and a "Sun City" organizer. "It means people who don't normally read the newspaper or listen to the news on the radio and TV will finally hear something, because they do listen to music and they do listen to what the stars say." According to Dutka, there was such an outpouring of interest by performers wanting to participate in the making of "Sun City" that there are now six versions of the song and it is being released as an album instead of a single.

"Sun City" and those who participated in recording it are proudly undercutting South Africa's glossy travel-brochure image of what Joseph N. Garba of Nigeria, former chairman of the UN's anti-apartheid committee, called "an optical illusion, a put-on show [intended] to mislead and delude an increasingly impatient world opinion."

The revenues from "Sun City," slotted for release on the Manhattan/Blue Note label this week, will go to the Africa Fund, a New York-based, non-profit organization that offers aid to the families of political prisoners and South Africans in exile.

—C.B. & D.B.



Musicians in South Africa must walk a tightrope of innuendo and self-censorship. "We have to be very careful what we write about," said Sipho "Hot Stix" Mabuse, South Africa's number-one recording star, "and how we choose to name our bands. For instance, you couldn't call a band 'Power'—that is interpreted as a statement of subversion."

Mabuse, who participated on a panel entitled "Apartheid and the International Music Industry," spoke of the shabby and careless treatment black musicians receive in South Africa's music capital, segregated Johannesburg: "We find a lot of musicians living in dungeons and back rooms."

"Personally, I have been humiliated," continued Mabuse, whose latest record has already sold 200,000 copies in South Africa. "Irrespective of what I have achieved as a musician in my country, I am still not recognized as a South African citizen."

In a call to action that had its origins at the United Nations in the mid-'60s, the world began to turn the tables on South Africa by boycotting all exchange of music, art, theater and the like with the outlaw nation. "The purpose of the

One audience member expressed concern that by limiting the cultural exchange with South Africa, blacks as well as whites are being hurt. "We cannot, in the process of destroying this evil system, make the exceptions that allow the system to continue," answered South African poet-in-exile Dennis Brutus. "I have bullet wounds in my body where I was shot by the South African secret police in Johannesburg, but we understand that we have to make sacrifices and suffer now in order to achieve our freedom in the near future."

But according to panel moderator Rick Dutka of Tommy Boy Records, this complex issue must be handled with great care so that musicians and other cultural workers, black and white, who oppose apartheid are not made to suffer hardships. He reminded the panel-

*Many artists are refusing offers from South Africa.*

## Dennis Brutus, South African poet-in-exile, urged a stringent cultural boycott of South Africa.

former Jerry Dammers, creator of the recent hit by his group called Special A.K.A., "Free Nelson Mandela." "I would call on more artists to write about real issues and not the nonsense that fills the charts," he said.

Dammers, who is white, shifted the focus from South Africa to the U.K. and U.S., where, he maintained, racism is still rampant. "We hear in England that blacks don't get played on MTV," he said, and assured the audience that it is much the same in Great Britain, where there are separate charts for white and black popular music. The standard for blacks is higher, yet whites receive more promotion.

Little Steven, who referred to songs like "Sun City" and "Free Nelson Mandela" as "reality records," expressed the hope that by "seeing the exaggeration of racism [in South Africa] people will take a closer look right here at home, where racism is very much alive."

Connie Blitt and Dennis Bernstein write regularly for *In These Times* from New York.



# Tunisia

Continued from page 9

Bourguiba and the ruling Socialist-Destourian Party. Tunisia has long been under pressure from Libya's Colonel Kaddafi, who has sought to impose his own distinctive pan-Arab aspirations on the country. Under Bourguiba, Tunisia has striven to consolidate links with Washington as a safeguard against the intentions of its powerful neighbor.

At the same time, the Bourguiba regime has taken a hard line on internal dissenters, at various times cracking down on the Tunisian Communist Party, the trade unions and, more recently, the growing fundamentalist elements sharply critical of Tunisia's pro-Western stance and its liberal brand of Islam. The country's political institutions long ago atrophied under the authoritarianism of the regime, whose periodic bouts of energetic repression have left Tunisia ripe for change. Among younger Tunisians, and Tunisians from the traditionally impoverished and militant south, Washington has always been guilty by association with Bourguiba, and vice versa.

This perspective will no doubt be reinforced by the air strike. Indeed, three days after the attack a strong police and military cordon still surrounded the U.S. embassy in Tunis, where anti-American demonstrations were expected within hours of the Israeli action. The mood was heightened by Arafat's accusation that the Israeli F-16s

had refueled at a U.S. base in the Mediterranean on their way to Tunis. In the wake of the attack, Kaddafi's ferocious criticisms of Tunisian links with Washington may well get a more serious hearing. That a proportion of dissenting Tunisians remains hostile to Libyan overtures—especially after Kaddafi's mass repatriation of Tunisian workers during the summer—does not mean that they will moderate criticism of their regime. In this sense, the \$70 million due to Tunisia by year's end in military modernization and training may well be a boost to the regime's ability to police its own people in the future.

The U.S. decision not to veto a Security Council Resolution condemning the attack may go some way to appease Tunisia. What worries the PLO, according to Faisal Aweidah, the organization's representative in London, is his belief that this is only one of many incidents that will finally sabotage the peace process. Aweidah told *In These Times* that he foresaw the possibility of continued attacks on the PLO and also hinted at mounting escalations in the current conflict, which has been confined to low levels by both sides throughout the year. He strongly criticized the hijacking of the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* by guerrillas demanding the release of 50 Palestinian prisoners in Israel. The incident provides clear evidence that the air strike has further jeopardized the PLO's ability to heal its divisions and agree on a unified strategy under Arafat.

**Jeremy Harding** regularly reports from London for *In These Times*.

# Cold War

Continued from page 17

Third World. They are not even primarily about the Third World. They point to the reality, the enduring reality of this East-West conflict.

**Chomsky:** Each of the factors you've mentioned is real, but you have failed to see the connection between them. You very much underestimate the military Keynesian effect. It's not a matter of the arms lobby, so for example—

**Halliday:** With the country united to the largest deficit in its history?

**Chomsky:** Yes, because this is a very costly means of industrial policy management, but it's the only one we have. That's a fact. And it goes way beyond the arms lobby. So let's take for example the development of computers—that's not the arms lobby. Now in the '50s, the government was virtually the sole purchaser of computers. In the '60s it was still purchasing, if I recall, about 50 percent and paying for the development. There is now a race, so-called, for developing what they call fifth-generation computers, super computers, mainly with Japan—Europe is out of it. Now in Japan that's controlled—that's organized by their industrial management system—and it has nothing to do with the military.

But how does it work in the U.S.? Funding for super computer development

is coming from the Advanced Research project agency at the Pentagon, from the Department of Energy—which is primarily a military department producing nuclear weapons—and from NASA—which is again largely a military organization. The way in which the U.S. organizes industrial production, the way it develops high technology—the cutting edge of the economy—the way it encourages sunrise industry, is by creating a government-guaranteed market for high technology production, and paying the research and development costs for it.

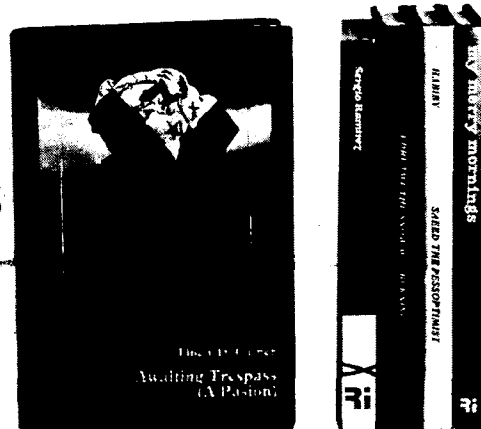
Now let's turn to the second case, the Third World and the conflict with the Soviet Union. They're very closely related. And again, since the U.S. is an open society, we can turn to the documentary sources that explain the relationship. In the later Carter administration the new phase of the arms race developed, prior to the Iran hostages and prior to Afghanistan. It was in 1978 in fact that Carter offered his proposal for the major increase in military budget.

In the last statement to Congress of the Pentagon in the Carter administration, Harold Brown, who was then Secretary of Defense, explained why we have to have a big strategic weapons build-up. The way he put it—which is essentially correct—is this: he said that our strategic weapons system is the foundation of our security, and he said within the framework of the strategic weapons system, our conventional forces become meaningful instruments of political and military control.

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# Festival

Continued from page 24

He has re-created the play as an out-and-out comedy, albeit one carrying a trenchant message about civic morality. It is an extraordinary experience to sit in a well-appointed theater, surrounded by a thoroughly popular audience, and hear wave after wave of laughter prompted by Ibsen's social realism. This is an audience that is wholeheartedly enjoying itself.

## Accessible Ibsen

There is much to be said for making Ibsen so pleurably accessible to the very people he yearned to address (or their counterparts, a century later and in another country). Before harranguing civic leaders, small businessmen and ambitious young professionals about their civic morality, you have to get their attention. Turner has certainly done that. The show also has something to offer lifelong Ibsen devotees. While the fundamental idea of the play is distorted by the extreme emphasis on comedy, there is a fascination in watching this facet of Ibsen's work, so often angled away from the audience, brought to the fore and burnished brightly.

Turner gives up a lot for what he gets, though. *An Enemy of the People* wasn't written as a morality play with a clearcut embodiment of virtue in the lead. Its mordant humor is directed just as despairingly at those who see politics as a morality play as at those who abandon all morals—but you'd never know it from this production.

The play recounts the fortunes of Dr. Thomas Stockman, a doctor in an economically declining port town. Stockman discovers that the water supply to the spa on which the city merchants have been banking for tourist dollars is seriously polluted.

He naively expects to be hailed as a hero for uncovering the truth—then, when the Chamber of Commerce types predictably

move to suppress his findings, the good doctor reacts hysterically, condemning the entire populace and democracy itself and proclaiming the truth belongs only to an intellectual elite. At the curtain, he has become a pariah but vows to fight on in lonely splendor.

It is important to the play that "the people" are never actually told anything resembling the truth. Their leaders deliberately distort matters, and when Dr. Stockman addresses a public meeting, his shock at discovering the perfidy of politics leads him to plunge into a fanatical tirade without ever laying out the facts.

It's also important to recognize that honoring the truth of Stockman's investigation would involve severe civic distress. For while the pollution he uncovers is in part metaphorical, it literally represents a potential economic disaster for the town. (Aside from its deeper commentary on the human condition, *Enemy* is a most effective polemic against dependence on tourism for economic development.) Stockman's dangerous obliviousness unsuits him for the patience and willingness to educate that make democracy work once in a while. His innocence is as lethal as the establishment's corruption.

This is far from apparent in Philip David-

son's characterization. Davidson makes the doctor a most endearing fellow, a bit single-minded and naive, but honest and admirably willing to stick up for his principles—a sort of cross between the Jimmy Stewart character in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* and Gary Cooper's sheriff in *High Noon*.

There are some excellent performances among the bad guys as well. William McKereghan plays the mayor—Dr. Stockman's brother—as a most plausible small-town politico. Richard Elmore, as a self-proclaimed progressive journalist who quickly caves in to pressure, is the epitome of quivering quislinghood. Paul V. O'Connor is achingly funny as a small businessman obsessed with "moderation."

The trouble is that these small-souled men are so easy to laugh at and a great many of those in this well-heeled audience who roar at the patent hypocrisy and self-serving platitudes of these laughable Babbits must have made similar decisions, and similar excuses, under pressure. In

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Turner's hands, Ibsen's satire is excoriating, but in the minds of the rollicking burghers and yuppies in the audience, it is clearly excoriating someone else. A dour-spirited critic might go so far as to label this outcome "Ibsen."

Not being quite so dour-spirited, myself, I suspect that in making the foregoing comments I am coming perilously close to committing Dr. Stockman's sin and failing to give people any credit. True enough, this production doesn't force the civic boosters and logrolling politicians in the audience to see an unpleasant reflection in the mirror. But there are other ways of patiently educating in a democracy. Who can say for sure that none of the prosperous types laughing at the compromised mayor and the weasling journalist will be shocked into introspection by the echo of their own laughter the next time they find themselves caught between profit and the truth?

Phillip Johnson is an Oregon-based journalist who writes on theater for the *Christian Science Monitor*.

## CALENDAR

### CHICAGO, IL

#### October 19

Benefit Dance Party for Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and IN THESE TIMES. Saturday, October 19th, 8:00 p.m. to midnight at Cross Currents, 3204 N. Wilton (at Belmont El), with host DJ Bill Zayas, from WFYR, 103.5 FM, the Horizons show. Featuring the best in contemporary, Latin and Afro-Cuban music. \$8.00 at the door, \$6.00 advance. Door prizes/cash bar. For more info call 384-0327.

#### October 20

"Art Meets Labor": Sponsors Studs Terkel, Olivia Chase, the Midwest Region of the National Writers Union, Jose Gonzales (MIRA-Mi Raza Arts Consortium), Victoria Johnson (Chicago Urban League), Rock & Roll Confidential and Guild Books invite you to meet outstanding leader of the labor and artistic movements. Wellington Church 615 W. Wellington, 3:00 p.m. Tickets \$10, \$5 unemployed. For more information (312) 386-1223.

### NEW YORK, NY

#### October 18

"South Africa and Revolution: The Rise of Black Workers Power." With South Africa and American activists/eyewitnesses. NYU, Loeb Student Center, Room 310, La Guardia Place and West 4th St. 7:00 p.m. Cosponsors: International Socialists, Socialist Unity, Workers Power. Hosted by NYU C.A.S.C. For info: (212) 923-6494.

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# Laughing at Ibsen

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival tweeks its audiences' expectations by skirting tradition.



By Phillip Johnson

**T**HE OREGON SHAKESPEAREAN FESTIVAL, currently celebrating its 50th anniversary season, would seem to be the institutional theater par excellence.

With the nation's largest company of full-time performers (around 60 each year) and the second largest audience (300,000-plus annually), it would appear squarely positioned in the cultural mainstream.

The Festival's management certainly understands what it takes to lure a prosperously middle-class audience from the West Coast's major cities to Ashland, a remote town in southern Oregon. There isn't any Neil Simon or musical comedy here, but there is a good bit of solidly classical theatre, conservatively rendered.

The Shakespearean productions in the outdoor replica of an Elizabethan theater (known breezily as "the Lizzie"), while often superb, are everything the culture-vulture set could desire in the way of safely removed pageantry and spectacle. "We have chosen to be what we are," says Artistic Director Jerry Turner, "a massively popular theater."

The Festival has an appealing penchant for tweaking the expectations of that mass audience, however, at least when working in the indoor Angus

Bowmer Theatre where the hand of tradition lies less heavy. Several years ago, Turner staged a version of *Julius Caesar* set in the midst of a Third World revolution—Caesar as an upstart military strongman, Marc Antony as a yuppie, the assassins in burnooses—that still provokes argument.

Last year's *Troilus and Cressida* was an even more radical step. Director Richard E.T. White, along with costume designer Michael Olich and set designer William Bloodgood, created a fierce anti-war satire in a half-punk, half-samurai never-never-land setting.

## Ibsen as comedy

This year's effort to turn the classics on their heads is Jerry Turner's *An Enemy of the People*, with Ibsen transplanted to the 20th-century Northwest and Americanized into a howling comedic success.

One may have mixed feelings about the results of the transplantation, but it is impossible to deny that Turner and his skillful cast have accomplished something extraordinary. In this production, Ibsen is *funny*. There is certainly a grim, sardonic humor in much of Ibsen that is almost always missed by directors (at least in this country). Turner has caught all of this, but he has done something more. *Continued on page 23*